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Music and Letters

JULY, 1921

VOLUME II.

NUMBER 3

EDITORIAL

THE readers of this magazine may like to know something of its prospects. Nobody's prospects are exactly dazzling at this particular stage of the world's history—in fact, it was the very worst moment, as things have turned out, to start such a venture. Still, there is some comfort in our all being in it together; we can sympathise with each other's troubles, and that is a step towards not being afraid of our own.

The venture has been well received. It has now put a year and a half behind it, and a noble six hundred (odd) have rushed into the breach to support it. That, in these difficult days, is magnificent, but it is not business; though, if that six hundred would be so kind as to multiply themselves by two, it would be. The way to do that sum is for every reader to secure one direct subscriber, and, indeed, there would be no harm in his getting two or three. To subscribe directly—addressing to The Manager, MUSIC AND LETTERS, 22, Essex Street, W.C. 2—makes all the difference to the balance-sheet, and therefore in the long run to the purchaser himself, because it hastens the day when the magazine can be improved.

I appeal with confidence to my readers for help in this way, on the ground that the magazine is worth making an effort to support. It aims at treating of musical subjects in a readable way. It is the only musical quarterly in this country, and as such can offer space to considered articles. The writers in it are all musical people and have only one axe to grind—the cause of good music in this country.

A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS.

SONG-TRANSLATIONS

THE competition announced in the last number of this magazine resulted as follows :—A hundred and forty-one songs were sent in to the judges, Mr. Plunket Greene, Mr. Walter Ford and Mr. C. L. Graves. They selected the following thirty-one to be printed, with the comment that half a dozen of them entirely met the case and the rest were highly creditable.

The figures in the right hand top corner refer to volume and page of the *Peters Edition*. For the October number the following (to reach the Editor not later than Aug. 1) are especially asked for, though others will be considered.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>I. 18. Der Neugierige.
20. Ungeduld.
52. Des Baches Wiegenlied.
54. Gute Nacht.
67. Der Lindenbaum.
92. Die Post.
98. Die Krähe.
102. Im Dorfe.
110. Der Wegweiser.
114. Das Wirtshaus.
122. Liebesbotschaft.
135. Ständchen.
162. Am Meer.
170. Der Erlkönig.
182. Heidenröslein.
184. Der Wanderer.</p> | <p>I. 212. Du bist die Ruh.
221. Der Tod und das Mädchen.
229. Über allen Gipfeln.
244. Ganymed.
II. 12. Der König in Thule.
27. Wer nie der Einsamkeit.
30. Wer nie sein Brod.
38. An die Thüren.
128. Dithyrambe.
140. Die Rose.
194. Schlafe, Schlafe.
227. Im Frühling.
III. 15. Wehmuth.
100. Auf dem Strom.</p> |
|--|---|

In the January number (1922) it is proposed to print translations of any of Brahms's songs, the well-known ones for choice; and after that, if it is not looking too far ahead, to go on to Schumann, Wolf and others.

Competitors are asked to assist the judges in the following ways :—

- (1) to send their copies typewritten,
- (2) to give the song in full exactly as it will sing (repeating lines where necessary, or altering them, for a repetition),
- (3) where an alteration of the time values of the notes is suggested, to show it clearly in the margin by note-values.

(4) not to sign the translation, but to enclose with it name and address on a separate sheet,

(5) to quote the title (as above) adding to it an asterisk in the case mentioned below, and

(6) to forward the whole on or before Aug. 1, to The Editor, *Music and Letters*, 3, King's Bench Walk, Temple, E.C. 4.

The translator retains his copyright in every case; † but where a song is marked with an asterisk after the title he allows any singer to sing it in public, and also, if he pleases, to print it in his programme with acknowledgment, thus: "Trans. by . . . (from *Music and Letters*)"—without fee. Where there is no asterisk specific application must be made for each song.

The Editor cannot undertake to return contributions of translators.

These translations are put out as an experiment. It seems fair to ask that before they are approved or condemned they shall be subjected to the test of being sung—the sole object for which they exist. They are not intended to suggest to those who wish to sing the originals that they should cease to do so, but only to meet the needs of those who wish to sing, or of an audience who may wish to hear them sing, in their own language. As to the dialect songs, it ought not to be harder to master a dialect than to sing in a foreign language so as to satisfy a native—and short of that it is not worth while singing the song in its original language at all.

Wohin?* (*W. Müller*).

I. 6.

Among the rocks and heather
I heard a little rill;
It sparkled in the sunlight,
And prattled down the hill.

I know not how it drew me,
I never questioned why;
We could not choose but follow,
My trusty staff and I.

And ever and on I followed
The murmuring of the brook;
Its voice grew loud and louder
With every step I took.

†With the exception of those signed "Paul England," of which the copyright belongs to Messrs. Boosey and Co., who kindly permit this reprint.

But where is it you lead me,
 O brooklet, tell me where?
 Your bubbling and your babbling
 Bewitch the very air.

And hark! A singing sweeter
 Than any that I know;
 What is it but the fairies
 That sing and dance below?

Sing on, my friend, sing on, then,
 And merrily take your way,
 For every brook that wanders
 Will find a mill one day.

ANON.

1. 22.

Morgengruss (W. Müller).*

Good morning to you, maid o' the mill!
 Why hide behind your window sill?
 No thought of me shall grieve you.
 Oh no! for if my words displease,
 Or glances make you ill at ease,
 I'll turn again and leave you,
 Turn and leave you.

But oh! then let me stand afar;
 And from the window where you are
 Look out, and do not shun me.
 Those eyes will put the stars to shame,
 That hair will rob the sun of fame,
 When you look down upon me,
 Down upon me.

Your slumber-sealèd eyes, that swim
 Like early violets' dewy dim,
 Shall the sun affright them?
 Were dreams so sweet and night so kind
 That day can never hope to find
 A kindness to requite them?
 To requite them?

Shake off! shake off this drowsy pall,
And gaze abroad, refreshed, on all
That heaven's expanses cover;
The lark on high now carols free,
And love peals out in jubilee
The rapture of a lover,
Of a lover.

DUMINSTER CASTLE.

I. 86.

Frühlingstraum* (W. Müller).

I dreamed of the sunny meadows
Where delicate breezes play,
The voice of the stream in April,
The song of the thrush in May.

And then the cock with his crowing
The stillness suddenly broke;
In the icy chill of the morning
I shivered and turned and awoke.

But who had painted the garden
That bloomed on the window pane,
And left me hoping and dreaming
That summer had come again?

I dreamed that I loved a maiden,
I dreamed that the maid loved me;
And oh! to hear her laughter,
And oh! her smile to see.

And then with the cock's shrill crowing
My heart awoke in pain,
And now in my lonely corner
I dream it all over again.

I close my eyes and wonder
If dreams can still come true,
If flowers can bloom on the window,
And the maid of my dreams be you.

K. B. W.

I. 120.

Der Leiermann (*W. Müller*).

Yonder down the village, there's an organ-man,
 With his frozen fingers playing as he can;
 On the icy causeway, in the falling snow,
 Barefoot there he wanders, shambling to and fro,
 Playing tunes forgotten years and years ago.

Not a penny jingles in his empty plate,
 House-dogs eye him snarling as he nears the gate;
 And he lets the great world pass him as it will,
 Turns his hurdy-gurdy, out of tune and shrill,
 No man hears or heeds him, yet he turns it still.

Queer old man, come with me; let us, you and I,
 Grind our tunes together, while the world goes by!

ELIZABETH MOTT.

I. 154.

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen (*Heine*).

I glowered upon her picture;
 Auld dreams cam back ance mair;
 I thoct life cam rekindlin'
 Her face as I stude there.

A bonny smile cam playin'
 About her rosy mou';
 Her een shone through her greetin'⁽¹⁾
 Like violets weet wi' dew.

My hert cam near to brakin';
 I cudna stop my tears,
 Ach, lass, and hae I tint⁽²⁾ you
 Through a' the weary years?

ALEXANDER GRAY.

(1) Weeping. (2) Lost.

This and the two that follow are taken from *Songs and Ballads chiefly from Heine*, by Alexander Gray, 1920 (Grant Richards), in which also are several of Schumann's songs.

I. 156.

Das Fischermädchen (*Heine*).

My bonnie fisher lassie,
It's landward you should sail.
Come, lay your loof⁽¹⁾ in mine, dear,
And whisper the auld love tale.

O, lean upon my hert, dear,
And be na fleyed⁽²⁾ o' me,
For ilka day you lippen⁽³⁾
Yoursel' to the bousterous sea.

My hert is like the ocean—
Noo raging, noo asleep,
And mony a pearl lies hidden
Far in its unkenned deep.

ALEXANDER GRAY.

(1) Hand. (2) Afraid. (3) Entrust.

I. 164.

Der Doppelgänger (*Heine*).

The nicht's deid still; there's no a soon'.
In this hoose dwalt the lass I lo'ed.
It's lang, lang sin' she quat the toon,
But aye the hoose stands whaur it stude.

A callant stands and gowps abüne;
He seems to dree the rage o' Hell.
It gars me grue when by the mune
I see nane ither than mysel'.

You ill-daein' wraith, gae, hod your face!
What gars you geck⁽¹⁾ at a' the pein
That ance I tholed⁽²⁾ upon this place
Sae mony a nicht in auld lang syne?

ALEXANDER GRAY.

(1) Mock. (2) Endured.

I. 176.

Gretchen am Spinnrade (*Goethe*).

My peace I hae tint,
My hert is sair;
Wanrestfu' I'll aye be
For evermair.

For when he's awa',
The place seems deid.
O' a' the lave
I tak nae heed.

My doited thochts
I canna tell;
I fear I'm fey
I'm no' mysel'.

My peace I hae tint,
My hert is sair;
Wanrestfu' I'll aye be
For evermair.

To see him only
I keep keekin' oot;
I juist gang furth
If he's aboot.

His gait sae prood,
His braw gallant mien;
The sweet lauch o' his mou',
The bricht glint o' his een.

His words sae winsome,
Wha wad miss?
His kind hand-shak,
And O! his kiss.

My peace I hae tint,
My hert is sair;
Wanrestfu' I'll aye be
For evermair.

For him my hert
Cries nicht and day;
O, I wad haud him
Sae ticht for aye,
And kiss and kiss him,
As he were mine;—
O, blithe in his kisses
Wad I dee syne.

ALEXANDER GRAY.

tint = lost.
wanrestfu' = unrestful.
lave = the rest.
doited = foolish.
fey = bewitched, possessed.

lauch = laugh.
keek = look.
haud = hold.
syne = then.

I. 201

Die junge Nonne (Craigher).

The storm through the forest is roaring amain,
 The convent is rocked by the rage of the blast,
 The thunder is rolling, the lightning's ablaze,
 And dark as the tomb falls the night.

Rave, ye winds! Rave, ye winds!
 My days have been wilder than you.
 I battled in vain with the tempest of life,
 My being was rent by the whirlwind of love,
 The lightnings of passion burnt fierce in my heart,
 And darkness of death filled my soul.

Pass on in thy fury, thou angry storm!
 'Tis calm in my bosom, my heart is at rest;
 With rapture I wait for my heavenly Lord!
 My soul, that has passed through the fire,
 Abides in His infinite love.

Oh! take me, my Saviour! With longing I wait!
 Thou heavenly Bridegroom, come to Thy bride!
 Deliver my soul from the fetters of sin!
 How sweet from the chapel the bell calls to prayer!
 It summons my spirit from earth,
 To soar to its heavenly home!
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

PAUL ENGLAND.

I. 216.

Auf dem Wasser zu singen (L. Graf zu Stolberg).

Borne on the mirror of clear flowing waters,
 Glideth at sunset our bark o'er the stream,
 So too my spirit on fancy's clear waters
 Glideth along in a heavenly dream.
 Bright in the firmament, bright on the waters,
 Burneth the sunset with roseate gleam.

Over the treetops that rise to the heaven
 Flusheth and fadeth the last crimson glow,
 Stirred by the breezes that stray from the heaven
 Rustle the reeds on the banks where they grow.
 Calm of the sunset and joy of the heaven,
 Call to the spirit above and below.

Evening decketh on swift flying pinions,
 Dark on the waters now broodeth the night,
 Ah, that no days upon time's fleeting pinions,
 Swift as my fancy might hasten their flight!
 So would my spirit on heavenward pinions
 Soar, with the morrow, to regions of light.

PAUL ENGLAND.

I. 236.

An die Musik (*Schober*).

Thou holy art, how oft in hours of sadness,
 When life's wild tumult surged around my way,
 Thy gentle power hath waked my heart to gladness
 And shown the dawning of a fairer day,
 A brighter world, a fairer day.

Full oft a strain from thy serene dominions,
 Some tender chord of harmony divine,
 Hath borne my soul aloft on heav'nward pinions!
 Thou holy art, my grateful praise be thine,
 My grateful praise be always thine.

PAUL ENGLAND.

I. 238.

Lachen und Weinen* (*Rückert*).

Laughter and crying, both in and out of season,
 Love knows them each well, but no proper reason.
 At dawn I laugh'd so for joy;
 And yet now I am crying,
 When the daylight is dying!
 But how can I tell why?

Crying and laughter, both in and out of season,
 Love knows them each well, but no proper reason.
 Last night I had just to cry
 And the very day after
 I am pealing with laughter!
 And O, my heart, tell me why!

VARIUM AC MUTABILE.

I. 240.

Nacht und Träume (M. v. Collin).

Holy night, thou hoverest o'er us!
 Quiet dreams thy path attending,
 With the moonlight softly blending,
 Comfort every weary, weary breast.
 O, ye blessed hours of rest!
 Waking to the toils of day,
 For your swift return we pray;
 Ah, holy night, thy peace restore us!
 Gentle visions, hover o'er us!

PAUL ENGLAND.

I. 242.

Litaney (J. G. Jacobi).

Rest and peace to souls departed!
 Peace to all who, broken hearted,
 Dreamed and hoped and loved and lost,
 All who, worn and tempest toss'd,
 Here below found comfort never,
 May their spirits rest for ever.

Rest and peace to souls departed!
 Souls of maidens loving hearted,
 Cast aside, deceived and shamed,
 All who human pity claimed,
 And the blind world pardoned never,
 May their spirits rest for ever.

All who ne'er knew morning's gladness,
 Whom the night brought only sadness,
 God in mercy give them grace,
 Grant their ransomed souls a place
 Where His glory fadeth never!
 May they rest in peace for ever.

ELISABETH M. LOCKWOOD.

I. 243.

Nähe des Geliebten (Goethe).*

I think of you when laughing waves and golden
 In sunlight gleam,
 And when the moon in silver fountains holden
 Hath shown her beam.

'Tis you I see when round the weary stranger
 Is whirled the dust;
 In deep of night on far-off ways of danger
 And dark distrust.

'Tis you I hear amid the muffled thunder
 Of mighty seas,
 And you whene'er I seek the silent wonder
 Of brooding trees.

I know you near, though far, and unforsaken
 My dream pursue . . .
 The sun is low, and now the stars awaken—
 I long for you!

G. M. FAULDING.

I. 250.

Dioskuren, Zwillingsterne* (*Mayrhofer*).

Dioscuri, heavenly brothers,
 Guide my vessel safe to harbour:
 Be my guardians on the waters
 Your compassion, your protection.

He, who to himself sufficing,
 Undismayed the storm encounters,
 Feels himself, 'neath your protection,
 Doubly brave and doubly blessed.

This my rudder, which, unswerving,
 Sets the course through wind and weather,
 Will I hang, when safe in harbour,
 On the altar in your temple.

STUART WILSON.

I. 253.

Der Musensohn* (*Goethe*).

By copse and farm I wander
 And pipe for goose and gander
 The first that comes to mind,
 And man or maid that chances
 To hear my merry fancies
 Goes jigging down the wind.

The primrose in the valley,
 The bluebell in the alley,
 My pipe impatient greets;
 I put them in my measure,
 When winter finds the leisure
 To dance and warm his wits,
 To dance and warm his five wits.

Oho! I set him dancing
 And April weather glancing
 On rick and roof and vane;
 Next year on upland fallow
 When all the broods are callow
 I learn the tunes again.

And then beneath the beeches,
 Where love in vain beseeches,
 And wisdom fain would yield,
 To prove her worth the winning,
 My music sets them spinning
 Along the grassy field.

Away along the grassy field.

Along the field, and yonder
 O'er hill and vale to wander
 And call the world their own.
 But I shall sit greyheaded
 And see their journey speeded,
 And know my work is done.

E. B. R. S.

II. 14.

Am Grabe Anselmo's* (*Claudius*).

I have lost thee, dear companion,
 Spring of all my mirth.
 Thou art gone, in vain I linger
 By thy bed of earth.
 Thou wilt not come.
 We were true and single-hearted;
 Ah, my dearest friend,
 I swear to love thy memory
 Till the end.

STUART WILSON.

Im Abendroth* (*C. Lappe*).

O how fair this world of Thine,
 Father, in the sunset burning,
 Basking in Thy gaze divine,
 Even dust to beauty turning,
 When the clouds are changed to rose
 And my western window glows.

Gone is weeping, fled is sorrow,
 Can I doubt Thy presence now?
 No! Serene will dawn to-morrow,
 Paradise is here below.
 And my soul before its flight
 Bathes in warmth and feeds on light.

STEUART WILSON.

Der Fischer* (*Goethe*).

Where tumbling waters rose and fell
 An angler watched his line;
 Deep peace was in the gentle swell
 And peace his heart within.
 He sat alone, he saw and heard
 The rippling of the flood;
 A whispering sound the water stirred
 And there a mermaid stood.

She sang to him, she spoke to him,
 " Why thus my brood betray
 With mortal wit and mortal spite
 To death in glare of day?
 Did you but know how happier far
 Are fish than mortal men,
 You'd come among us, as you are,
 And be yourself again.

" The sun and moon delight to drink
 The freshets of the main,
 Wave-wash'd, they rise and leave the brink
 At dawn as fair again.
 The heav'n's own image here is kissed
 To everlasting blue;
 And can you then your own resist,
 Made here eternal too? "

The tumbling waters rose and fell
 And wet his naked feet,
 And through his heart there surged a swell,
 As when true lovers meet.
 She sang to him, she spoke to him;
 Beneath the watery floor
 She drew him willing to her will,
 And no man saw him more.

CHERRY BROOK

II. 44.

Schwager Kronos* (*Goethe*).

On with you, Kronos, onward, charioteer!
 Away to the plains!
 Heart and brain within me surging
 Chafe at your loit'ring.
 Forth! Stumble your way
 Over stock and stone of the path
 Through the portals of life.
 Speeding onward in a breathless career,
 Speeding onward, daring crag and scaur.
 Up then! No dallying,
 Hope ever beckons us on.
 Fair, grand, boundless,
 Open stands before us the world.
 And, when peak calls to peak,
 Ever th' eternal soul
 Summons us forth through the ages to be.
 Now by the roadside a shelter bids you stay
 And a welcome is waiting for you
 Where a maiden looks out from the door.
 Quaff your fill, clear and cool.
 Give me, too, maiden, of thy foaming bowl,
 Let me worship thy glowing youth.
 On then, on and away,
 Ere the sun be set. Ere he set.
 Ere on the moorland
 The evening mists enfold me,
 Ere my chattering teeth and feebly tottering limbs
 Presage the end.

Blind in the sunset, drunk with its glory,
 Dazed with billowy fire,
 Lost in utter bewilderment,
 Hurl me forth into Hades' dark night.

Now let clamour of horn,
 Din of the clattering hoof
 Waken Orkus, and tell him we hasten.
 That so at the gate
 The host may friendly receive us.

ARRY S. Moselle.

II. 61.

Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* (*Schiller*).

Hark, like surges of the swelling ocean,
 Or from booming rocky caves the moan of waters,
 Rise from gloomy deeps their heavy, hollow,
 Anguished cries of woe.

Pain-distorted every face,
 Their mouths despair with barren curses fills.
 Every eye is sunken,
 Anxious glances closely watching on Cocytus' ferry,
 Weeping follow that most bitter tide.

In despair one asks another softly,
 "Will there never be an end?"
 Eternity rolls o'er their head full circle,
 Breaks the scythe of Time himself in two.

STUART WILSON.

II. 92.

Der Einsame (*C. Lappe*).

At night, when all is silent,
 And crickets' chirping fills the air,
 Beside my hearth I love to lie
 And watch the glowing embers die,
 Content, without a care.

Thus watching by the firelight,
 Cozy and still the hours run on;
 And then, as fainter sinks the glow,
 I stir the coals, and think, "Heigh-ho!
 Another day has gone!"

My daily joys and sorrows,
 The friendly talk, the welcome toil,
 Once more in mem'ry I retrace,
 But nought of evil finds a place
 My restful hour to spoil.

And thus my fancy wanders
 To dreamland, ever fresh and fair;
 When lovely visions round me close
 And fill my soul with sweet repose,
 For slumber I prepare.

True peace and true contentment
 By country hearths alone I find;
 To those who in the city live
 Her stormy joys the world may give,
 But never peace of mind.

Chirp on, ye merry crickets,
 I love to hear your cheery tone;
 Still share with me my tiny room,
 For when your song breaks through the gloom,
 I am not quite alone.

PAUL ENGLAND.

II. 150.

Gross ist Jehovah der Herr (*J. L. Pyrker*).

Great is Jehovah the Lord,
 The heavens and the earth His mighty power proclaim.
 Thou hear'st it when storms madly rage,
 When wild waters o'er crags thunderous roar.
 Great is Jehovah the Lord.
 Dread His mighty power.
 Thou hear'st it in the whispering leaves of the forest,
 See'st it in waving of golden corn,
 In the sweetness and bright glowing glory of flowers,
 At night in the sheen of the star sown heavens.
 Dread it speaks in the thunder's deep roll
 And flames in the lightning's sudden shattering blow.
 Yet clearer still thy trembling heart to thee shall reveal
 Jehovah's power.
 Yet clearer still thy heart shall reveal Jehovah's power,
 The power of God Eternal.
 Lift thine eyes unto Him
 And trust in His loving kindness.
 Great is Jehovah the Lord.

H. B. FITCH.

Der Kreuzzug (*Leitner*).

The hermit from his cell on high
Looks down upon the vale,
Where goodly knights come riding by
In coats of glittering mail.

Their pious voices rise and fall
In solemn chant and slow;
The Red Cross banner tells to all
The holy path they go.

They reach the shore,—fresh blows the gale,
The stately ship flies on,
And soon the distant gleaming sail
Shows like a slender swan.

The hermit sees the vessel fade,
His thoughts are far away;
"I, too, have joined the great crusade,
Though in my cell I stay.

"Life's treacherous seas alone I fare,
Life's burning desert sand;
What more can brave Crusader dare,
To reach the Holy Land!"

PAUL ENGLAND.

Grenzen der Menschheit* (*Goethe*).

When the Ancient of Days, the Eternal,
With a waft of his hand from heaven's rolling cloudways
Earthward his lightning shafts pregnant with blessing throws,
Asking forgiveness I fall before him,
Kneeling to kiss the hem of his robe.

For the gods above are gods eternal; we are but men.
Man striving upward strikes the stars with his soaring ambitions.
Foothold is there none, infirm he sways and totters,
The plaything he of cloud and tempest.

Strong in his manhood, stalwart of sinew,
Stands upon the stable earth man self-reliant.
And, as he strains aloft, he confesses
Only the oak and the vine his masters.

What then divides them, gods and men?
 From gods descending flows, wave on wave, a perpetual stream.
 But men are stormtost; the floods devour us, and we go under.

A narrow circle limits and binds us;
 But each generation, forging a new link,
 Strengthens the chain of their endless existence.

F. S. W.

III. 212.

Prometheus* (*Goethe*).

That heaven of yours conceal,
 O Zeus, with lowering clouds;
 And take, like a boy with thistles,
 Your revenge on oaks, forsooth,
 And mountain spires.

This my earth you'll leave to me, you were best,
 And this my cabin you never built,
 And this my hearth
 Whose ruddy glow
 Provokes your envy.
 There's nothing more pitiful living
 Than you, ye gods, nothing!

You feed anxiously
 With sacrifice and prayer and incense
 Your majesty.
 Starvation! Were it not children and beggars,
 Thrive on sanguine folly.
 I was a child once, helpless and ignorant,
 And would turn a vacant eye to the sunlight,
 As if in it was an ear to listen to my crying,
 A heart like mine, to pity all
 In sorrow or oppression.

Who helped me to defy the Titans' arrogance?
 Who rescued me from shame or death, or made me free?
 Who but thyself has been thy helper,
 Young devoted heart?
 And then, devoted, turned mistaken
 To render thanks
 To slumbering gods above thee.

Give you honour? Not I!
 When have you ever soothed the burden of misery?
 Give you honour? Not I!
 When have you ever dried the tears of unhappiness?
 What has made me man
 But the mighty hand of Time
 And of Fate, whose decrees co-eternal
 You and I both honour?

Or did you fancy
 That I, tired of living,
 Would flee to deserts, just for dreams
 That never came to waking?

Behold then!
 I make man in my own image,
 Make a race my own equal,
 To suffer, to sorrow,
 To enjoy, and take their pleasure;
 But your laws to laugh at—
 Like me.

F. S.

Der Entsühnte Orest* (*Mayrhofer*).

V. 42.

The waters lap the land I love
 And fret her golden shore,
 And whisper low—"At last! at last;"
 I stand a king once more.

Mycenæ keeps my honour bright
 And gives my labours room,
 And o'er my head now broadens out
 The tree of life in bloom.

The spring returns, and with her brings
 The rose at dawn of day;
 And love in her enchanted boat
 Now oars her gentle way.

O Artemis, my friend at need,
 Thou gav'st me once release,
 O grant, for life can hold no more,
 That I may die in peace.

ANON.

V. 47.

Freiwilliges Versinken (Mayrhofer).*

O sun! Where goest thou? Say where?
 In ocean's cooling wave
 I go to lave
 My flaming body; thus new power of work
 And ever quickening might
 Descend from my unfailing source of light.
 I nothing take: my only care is giving:
 However spendthrift be my living
 My setting rays give golden light,
 A glorious ending! Then comes night.
 How soft the moon! The stars are paling
 While I am up and day prevailing.
 When once they see my crownèd head
 Is gleaming brightly,
 To shine on other darkened lands
 They vanish lightly.

STEUART WILSON.

VI. 28.

Die Götter Griechenlands (Schiller).*

Lovely world! Where art thou? O unstable,
 Shall thy springtime ne'er return again?
 Livest only in the land of fable—
 Only in the poet's fairy strain?
 As a dream or half-forgotten story
 Nature mourns her dead divinity;
 Empty shadows of departed glory
 Mock her former empery.

ANON.

This is one of sixteen stanzas which bewail the fair humanities that retreated before the advance of Christianity.

VII. 36.

Uf'm Bergli bin i' g'sässe (Goethe).*

(Swiss to Devon dialect.)

Raight öp awv'r, tap o' th'ill thur,
 Whur th' nestin' b'rds dü baide,
 They was singin' an a-springin'
 I' thur joy, fur an' waide.

Awv'r yander, i' th' orch'rd,
 They thur awld drummle-dores⁽¹⁾
 Was a böomin' an a-söomin'
 An a-düin' of thur chores.⁽²⁾

Öp the goyal,⁽³⁾ i' the brimmles⁽⁴⁾
 Whur the butterflies mäak free,
 They was skippin' an' a-sippin'—
 'Twas a bräav sight tü see.

An' whü'd com bai but my awn Jan,
 An I'd shaw mun so gläad
 'Ow they'm läafin' an a-güafin';—
 Us'd läaf tü, us wüd.

F. W.

(1) Bumblebees. (2) Jobs, business. (3) Combe. (4) Brambles.

In *The Break of Day*, by Rollo Russell, 1893 (Fisher Unwin), there are good translations of *Nähe des Geliebten*, *An die Musik*, and *Norna*, and one, not quite so successful, of *Heidenröslein*; there are also five of Schumann's songs.—Ed.

SONG-TRANSLATION

THE object of this paper is to draw attention to the neglected art of song-translation.

Translation has, like any other art, a technique and an ideal. The ideal is to put into an English mouth singable words which do not falsify the original, and which succeed in making singer and listener forget that there is such a thing. The technique is that of a poet, as opposed to a versifier, with an exceptionally musical ear, and all technique is thrown away without patience, self-effacement and a conscience. Translation is a neglected art for two or three reasons. Not many people realise that it is art, and so it is usually of inferior quality; few have any idea of the gift and, failing that, the effort required to make a good one; singers will not, or do not, use translations good or bad.

The sense must be singable. In Schubert, whom at the moment we are chiefly considering, there are a good many songs which no one but a German can sing with any conviction. In *Das Wandern* we sympathise with the general busy-ness more than with the philosophical contemplation of it. The name-cutting and amateur-gardening of *Der Ungeduld* we leave rather to children. We cannot quite reproduce the atmosphere of the master and the 'prentice in *Am Feierabend*. We have no word for *der Jäger*; "hunter" calls up foreign travel, and the green coat, which the plot of *Die schöne Müllerin* gives him by implication, spirits us off to Sherwood and a set of chivalrous or, at any rate, quite other ideas; "ranger" suggests a liveried denizen of Windsor forest, or a competitor in a cup-tie; "hunter" is what he is not, even if the word were otherwise possible; "poacher" is what he probably is, but for his lack of humour and certain other concomitants which we sadly miss. *Aufenthalt* misses its mark because we have no mountains or forests that make a like impression upon us; only by an effort of imagination can we get inside Brahms's *Waldeinsamkeit* and Jensen's *Waldeggespräch*. Then the *Morgengruss* and the various *Ständchen* (except "Hark, hark, the Lark") say rather more than we should say, because we are undemonstrative, but also more than we really feel; there is a kind of prostration and abandonment in them which something in us rebels at. In the songs with classical subjects again—

Heliopolis, *Memnon*, *Der entsühnte Orest*, *Philoctet* and others, there is a kind of Baedeker-like accuracy which does not appeal to us; even Goethe's fascinating *Der Musensohn* is a little spoilt, in one man's opinion, by the rather pompous apostrophe at the end. The remedy is either to choose other songs, and there are plenty, which are of more universal appeal, or to rewrite the situation of the song, leaving out what is merely local. If it is objected that we have no right to alter Goethe, or even less eminent poets, it may be replied that to give the local colour without explanation to those who have no standard of measurement falsifies the spirit in order to remain faithful to the letter, and that it will be time enough for people to know what the poet actually said, when they can read enough German literature to know what he meant by it. It is to be remembered that we are translating not Goethe, but Goethe (or anyone else) as set by Schubert and sung by an Englishman, and we cannot afford to make either of the latter ridiculous.

Goethe and Schiller, and still more Heine, as set by Schubert, are a very pretty problem; the Bernards and Baumbergs, and the whole list of Schubert's songwriters, down to Herr Uz, do not so much matter. Take Goethe's *Erlking*. The unevenness of the lines—iambes and anapaests all mixed together—are the very voice of the father's anxiety, the spitting consonants (*mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt*) and soothing vowels (*Du liebes Kind, komm' geh' mit mir*) the very echo of this battle with an unseen foe. But Sir Walter Scott, to take no lesser name, has heard there nothing but a galloping horse, and translates both alike by the cantering

O come and go with me, thou loveliest child;

and the colourless

Oh, come and go with me, no longer delay.

This was only one poet translating another, unhampered by any thought of Schubert, who had just been busy getting born. But the musician-poet-translator has to listen to Schubert as well. For *Du liebes Kind* he must find eight syllables that will spread out over four bars of long notes, with singing vowels and consonants that blur no dreams, and, for *mich reizt*, thin vowels pointed by spiteful consonants that will at the same time allow of ten syllables being crowded into two bars. *Non cuivis contingit*—we can't all of us always be "on our day." We may get the dream, but not the spitefulness, or the spitefulness, but not the boy's agony of terror. And there is no remedy for this. On the other hand the translator has his special opportunities. The composer cannot alter his poet's words, and is obliged at times to

run counter to their lilt in maintaining the natural rise and fall of his melody. Schubert, as we all know, is the one song writer who was never seriously troubled by this exigency, since his power of varying a melody and yet not obscuring its individuality was almost infinite. Yet even with him there are half a dozen places in a song where a translator can come to his support. The music to *Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind* lays stress on *seinem*, a quite unimportant word; the translator must keep the stress, but he need not put "his" there. Or again, in *das ächzende Kind*, Schubert gives the highest note of the whole song to the light, unvocal syllable *en*; and though height is not the same thing as accent, yet in the circumstances it is difficult to sing without an accent, and the translator has his opportunity to find a resonant vowel for that place.

But this attention to word and line, to pitch and accent, vital as it is, is a small part of the translator's problem. The sweep of the song, its varying moods, its general character are both more difficult and more important to reproduce faithfully. Take the two songs which Goethe called *Wanderers Nachtlied*. *Der du von dem Himmel bist* is of liturgical plainness, until the last line, which is translucent and ethereal; the other *Über allen Gipfeln*, tells in a whisper of the manifoldness of Nature, and the internal ecstasy of the beholder is rather a part of than a disturbance of the scene. Schubert found these things, of course, in Goethe, but he has put them into his music in the staid quavers in the first song leading up to the soaring semiquavers of the last line, and the picturesquely broken phrases of the second song out of which a climax indeed emerges, but is hardly noticed. We, who translate, must find these things in Schubert, not in Goethe. And one way to do it is to write out the plain sense, in plain prose, as an Englishman would feel it, of the German, and then to put the German away and sing over the tune till our written words begin to shape themselves in it.

Schubert lives wholeheartedly in all the months of the year, but his favourite is April. His *Lachen und Weinen* is typical. There he alternates mode, in *Der Musensohn* key; elsewhere he contrasts rhythm or harmony, or the stresses of his phrase, or the texture and motion of the accompanying figure. It would be too much to say that words can follow all this—in fact, this diversity is just what music can and words cannot make. But not to hear it, and to write words as if it was not there is, sooner or later, to write insensitively. Words can sometimes do no more than not strike a jarring note; but that is a great deal. And to know what jars, or does not jar, we must consult the music, which has absorbed and epitomised the mood, and which, with the great song-writers, cannot lie.

The ideal before the translator is, then, to put into the singer's mouth words which satisfy him both as a singer and as a man, and which do not falsify the poem nor make nonsense of the composition; if there is reason to hope that the audience will be able to hear the words, it will be necessary to satisfy them too. It is not necessary that it should look well on a programme; songs are meant to be enjoyed in the room, not criticised in the train on the way back. It is all very well, however, to put forward these high visions for contemplation, but we know that in practice the thing appears very differently. Few of us remember ever to have heard a good translation of a song. If we call translation an art, then, we must admit that it is an art which very few master. The others, when they address themselves to Schubert's songs, for instance, to judge from such extant versions as one has seen, live from line to line, not from stanza to stanza or period to period.

Rather than dissect any existing translation let us make one ourselves. We will "do," as the boys say, the "praise of Italy," from the second *Georgic*—

Sed neque Medorum silvæ ditissima terra,
Nec pulcher Ganges atque auro turbidus Hermus
Laudibus Italiæ certent, non Bactra neque Indi
Totaque turiferis Panchaia pinguis harenis.

We should write, perhaps, for our rough copy—

But not the Median wilds, of wealth untold,
Nor Ganges fair, nor turbid Hermus' gold
May vie with Italy, nor Balkh immense,
Nor India, nor Arabia's frankincense.

That is worthy almost of the author of

Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly goddess, sing!

and of Flaxman's illustration, where the muse is obviously "sweeping" her *kithara* and blind Homer is painfully picking out the harmonics on his. But see what we have done! We say "wilds" (which is no translation) because "forests" is a syllable too many, and "woods" is weak and "wolds" stilted. We glibly invert—Ganges fair—and

don't notice it, till a friend looks over our shoulder and says :—" Yes, I was there once—two million Hindus at the confluence with the Jumna ; curious that the fair should have been known to the Romans !" We have put " Italy " in the wrong place for emphasis ; it is not clear that Bactria, India and the rest are not praised quite as much. And why is Balkh " immense " ? Obviously, to rhyme with frankincense, but also because, subconsciously, " Balkh " suggests " bulk." But the graver fault is that we have made a dull catalogue, and have felt none of the eloquence that Virgil can't repress as he walks us round his herb-garden. Let's try again. If we write :—

Leave to the Medes their forest wealth untold,
To Ganges beauty and to Hermus gold ;
Saba and Balkh and Ind may boast a name,
But none may vie with Italy's fair fame,

we have corrected some of these mistakes, though we have left out the frankincense (not perhaps very essential—it was rather guide-book). We might get a little more feeling into it with—

In Saba, Balkh and Ind who will may roam,
But he'll come back to Italy and home.

And so on. No one can make the ideal translation except in a context, i.e., with a purpose—and not always then.

The amateur translator has two nightmares—that he will not be able to find poetical words and that he will be left stranded for a rhyme, especially (in German) a double rhyme. It has not, as a rule, occurred to him that almost any word can be used in poetry if you know how to use it, and that double rhymes come (like happiness) most readily when they are not being looked for. No one calls " and," " but," " for " or " a," his," " the " poetical words, but a good deal depends on the adroit use of them, whereas " love " and " honour " slip easily into their place when called. And as for double rhymes, they are seldom much use, except when they come uncalled. How glad Mr. Housman must have been when in

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger
When Uricon the city stood :
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,

a virgin rhyme suddenly stood before him, interesting in its imperfection and convincing in its perfection.* But if rhyme does not present itself, there is a good deal to be said for doing without it; assonance is sometimes available, and alliteration may lend its artful aid. But sham rhymes are anathema. "Gleameth—dreameth" and "saying—playing" are refuges for the destitute.

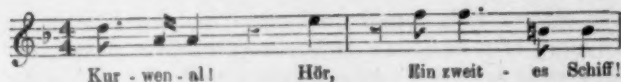
All this is technique, a learned name for practice. Practice takes first the form of "tips"; we know by rote that there is no manageable rhyme to "babe" (out of Jabberwocky), as we knew there was only one place in a hexameter where *redivivum* would go. But gradually rote and routine become instinct. Words become servants instead of masters; and the question of what you may say is merged in the much more important question of what you must say. The aim of technique is to teach people what they can leave out. First go the adjectives. They are ousted from the end of the line, where they sound terribly thin, and with more difficulty from the middle; when they come back again, it is as "chosen" epithets, or in order to do work, to hold the place of a noun, or what not. Froude and Shakespeare have about one purely picturesque epithet to a page. The conversational phrases and the journalese follow. They die harder. They are more insidious enemies, because we talk and read the papers a great deal. Then the purple patch; we are under the hallucination that music and poetry are beautiful by dint of ornament, whereas they are beautiful, like locomotives and mothers nursing babies, because they are doing work. Last of all the line or phrase that is in itself good, but is out of the picture. It has cost trouble, but it must go. It is a fearful wrench, but if it stays it will spoil all the rest. Our comfort is that Goethe and Schubert went through it all before us, though they knew it all in their cradles—as Heine said the Romans, luckily, knew the accusative of *amussis*, or they would never have had time to conquer the world.

All this sounds rather like an article, which I did not read, in some educative journal many years ago, under the title "How I taught a youngster to write verse." People who teach verse often cannot write it, any more than people who teach singing can, necessarily, sing. Both are apt to be "failed B.A.'s." It is a common accusation against critics that they cannot compose; but all that is being urged for the moment is that writers should be critics of their own compositions. If

*Others may think differently, but the present writer feels Shelley's verse stagnate under his "ocean—devotion" rhymes. His "rock thee—mock thee" is better, because we have a genius for monosyllables; but it is only with his "later—scatter" that his verse takes to itself wings. One wonders how the French can ever take pleasure in their identical *voie—envoie* or the Germans in their facile *leben—geben*.

Goethe had condensed and proportioned the second part of *Faust* as he did the first, or Schubert had pruned, not his quartet in D minor, but his pianoforte Fantasia in C major, the imputation of "omniscience" in the one case and the double edge of "*himmlische Länge*" in the other would have had less force.

We have discussed some of the translator's difficulties and come now to the musical translator. Here is his problem in a nutshell. He has before him, for instance, the neatherd's call when King Mark comes in the third act of *Tristan* :—



Why can he not say "Kurwenal! Hear! A second ship!"? (1) "Hear!" suggests something solemn, like "Hear ye, Israel!" and the boy is only excited. "Hark!" won't do, because it still suggests that there is a sound to listen to; and if it were understood in the sense of "Hark you" it would be too familiar. "See!" won't do, because he is turning (on the stage) to Kurwenal and away from the ship, besides, he knows Kurwenal is too busy to look; though "look" might, because we use it without meaning that anyone is actually to *see* anything. "Oh!" "Ho!" "Hi!" "Quick!" are all counsels of despair. What he wants to convey is simply "A ship!"; but "ship" has a rather thin vowel for the emphasis he wants; so let him say "A sail!" and he can sing the first word on any note he likes, a B flat or a G, since it will not in any case be heard, though the purist will not. I am afraid, agree with this high-handed proceeding. (2) There are several objections to "second." It is quite impracticable to prolong the first syllable; the first vowel is too thin for the emphasis; the "nd," even if it were made to precede a vowel, would be too clumsy for the quaver, and, preceding "s," would be impossible. We might have said perhaps "Look! A sail! A sail!" if the melody had not that drop at the end; but it is clear that in English we should pitch the second "sail" higher than the first. Or "Look! A sail, again"; only that suggests not a new ship, but perhaps the old one turning back or going somewhere else. So let us write "Kurwenal! A sail! Another one!" (although we are conscious that the second syllable of "another" is not an ideal one to prolong) until we can find something better. We have, at any rate, found something that the boy really wants to say and put it into words which he might very well use; or

if the purist liked to write "Look! Another one!" and if the boy pointed his arm, like the old mariner in the picture, telling stories of the West Indies to the young Raleigh, it would be intelligible enough.

All this self-criticism your translator will apply in a tenth of the time that it takes to write it down, but it will take possibly ten times as long, or more, to find the thing that will do. And what inducement has he to take this trouble? None whatever, except his own pleasure in good work. Such determination to be content with nothing short of the best is rare: many rough copies have to be torn up in the process. He looks for payment; but money can only reward quantity, not quality, of result, and his rough copies would not impress a publisher. So he must be content with unpaid, unthanked, untainted virtue and the world's scorn of a dreamer. It is a very pleasant dream, and why should he want to eat his cake and have it too? We pay for goods we order, and poetry cannot be written to order; hence most of the translations in printed collections of songs are unsingable.

The translator, then, needs a conscience. He also needs patience. He needs not only self-criticism, but the criticism of others; and this is not as a rule expressed in neat sentences with a nominative case, verb and predicate all complete, but is indicated by a shrug of the shoulders, a vague question, or a vaguer "it won't do," without any hint of what, exactly, won't do. The translator then knows he has to scrap his chosen rhyme or phrase or scheme and practically re-write, for "patching" hardly ever produces good results. The best thing is to put it away for a time; May can often find the mood that January refused.

But the chief obstacle in the way of good translation is the indifference of the singer. His case, to put it as he feels it, is something like this.—"The music itself is German, and it will not sound natural with any other words. I want to sing a certain number of foreign songs, in any case, to give variety to my programme. A foreign language has the additional merit of a certain obscurity which veils difficulties of enunciation and throws a glamour over rather trivial phrases. No translation I have ever seen was worth the paper it was written on. Suppose there were a good translation—better, even, than the original, as it often might well be in Schubert's case—I should still feel awkward singing words that the composer had never heard. I have learnt the song with the original words which I should now have to unlearn."

Some of these statements may be dismissed as confessions of weakness—difficulties of enunciation can be got over, the singer need not allow any phrase to sound trivial, and a programme need not be dull enough to require the variety of a foreign language. That the

music itself is German is a valid objection as far as it goes. In that case, and it is not equally felt in all songs, we must omit that particular song. "Hark! hark! the lark," is not one of his best songs. "Who is Silvia?" undoubtedly is, but opinions differ as to whether it represents Shakespeare to an Englishman.* But it would not be difficult to pick a dozen of his best where there is nothing in the music that an Englishman could not take to his heart. The question of the sacrilege involved in substituting other words than those which Schubert actually set is best met by looking critically at those he did set: it would be difficult to assert that an English poet, if he addressed himself to the musical problem, could not make a better fist of it. The last point, that the singer would have to unlearn his song and learn it afresh, must be respected, whenever that is really the case; but it used to be the case more often than it is. It should be remembered that operatic singers are ready to sing their parts in two, or more, languages.

But now look at another side of the question. A song is the most *personal* thing in music. Originally both words and music were the singer's own; and picturesque forms of copyright were in use to secure him in possession. To steal them was, in the Andaman Islands, punishable with death; among the Sioux a son, but no one else, could buy them of his father with a gift of much tobacco; for the Ojibbeways they "shot spirit" into a sick man, or into one who was to be initiated into religious mysteries, and as such were the inalienable stock-in-trade of the doctor and priest. We have changed that. In our concert seasons a new discovery frequently goes the round of the singing masters and their pupils. In spite of that, we still feel that the best singers make the song "their own," and that it comes to us as a direct emanation from their spirit, as a purely personal thing.

Now personality can only be convincing in matters we thoroughly understand. Our mother tongue is one of them. In exceptional cases—for a man who has a "spiritual home" somewhere across the Channel or the North Sea—a foreign language may be so; German, let us say, is then part of his personality and, if he desires to express that part of it, he has the right to sing Goethe and Heine in the original. But if he has not had such advantages, his singing of them is a pose, and he has no right to inflict the language he does not know on those who know it well, nor the language he thinks he knows on those who do not know it at all—and there are sure to be a good many such in most audiences. The audience's possible ignorance of a

* It is a piece of luck for us that these two go better to the English words than to the German of Reil and Bauernfeld, which he was presumably setting, whereas his settings of Scott are very difficult to accommodate.

language is not a fatal bar to their enjoyment; for it is quite possible to listen with pleasure to the Czecho-Slovaks, or an Arab encampment for that matter, without understanding a word. But that is not the whole pleasure of a song; the personality is there, no doubt, but it reaches us through a veil. It is not, however, the audience's point of view we are considering, but the mental effect of a foreign language on the singer. Unless he can think and dream in German there is, if ever so slight, a lack of conviction in his *Erlkönig* or his *Doppelgänger* in the original. The singers who do not know foreign languages up to this standard are, and will always be, the majority. It might be argued that they have, then, no business with foreign songs at all, and that Béranger was right—

Redoutons l'Angiomanie;
Elle a déjà gâté tout.
N'allons point en Germanie
Chercher les règles du goût.
N'empruntons à nos voisins
Que leurs femmes et leurs vins.
Mes amis, mes amis,
Soyons de notre pays;
Oui, soyons de notre pays.

—and that we ought to confine ourselves to Campion, Henry Lawes, Storace, and our own folk-songs. Well, there would be a good deal to be said for singing Parry's and Stanford's storehouses of good song instead of only praising them. But music travels faster and farther than words. Mr. C. S. Myers found the natives in the Murray Islands singing Malay tunes when it was practically certain there had been no speech-communication between the two. A native of Negapatam sang me once to Tamil words an Indianised version of a Breton folk-melody which he had doubtless picked up in the harbour from some French sailor. Much more, then, is music in Europe, with its printed notation and organised concert-tours, a *lingua franca*. We can no more afford to dispense with the songs of other nations than with their wines and oranges; and as we have to fortify the wine and make marmalade of the oranges, so we have to translate the songs.

The singer who says there are no good translations says, of course, that translators *have* in the past always "made marmalade" of the songs. We may grant him his retort and yet feel that the want of success has an explanation. For translators have concentrated upon the wrong things—on rhyme, chiefly, and the idea that their work should look symmetrical in print. Rhyme is certainly an addition.

It gives a composer a *point d'appui*; but the translator is not legislating for the composer. It gives the singer the feeling that a line which is otherwise nonsense has, perhaps, some reason for existing. It gives the audience a lead to a successful guess at one word more of those which the singer is failing to pronounce. And it gives the translator the feeling that he is writing poetry when he perhaps is not. But since we fervently sing the Psalms, which are unrhymed, and whose form depended often on acrostics which the English does not preserve, and make choral symphonies of Walt Whitman, and since somebody has offered President Wilson's speech on the Constitution as a song for serious consideration (and that it did not receive any may not have been the fault of the words), it cannot be claimed that rhyme is a vital necessity for song, still less for translated song.

A song as it is actually sung looks a poor thing on paper, just as a galloping horse puts his legs into rather ridiculous positions, and a speech in Parliament, if printed as it would appear in a phonographic record, would be rather a sorry sight. But the translator's business is not for the eye. He has above all things to hear the song as sung, and at all times to come to the singer's support; just as a certain intelligent white horse belonging to Mr. Garth, that grand old sportsman, used, when his master was in the eighties, to edge a little to the off or the near side as he felt him getting a little tired to east or west. Horses, no doubt, have a certain position to keep up in "their world," and that horse must have felt a fool lurching along a road like an inebriate; but he effaced himself for somebody who was more important. And that is what translators have to do.

In this old country, with its exact scholarship, we shall properly insist on the words being truthfully rendered. But there are various kinds of truth; and, of them, truth to the spirit is highest. Mr. Alexander Gray is abundantly right in translating Heine's

Und holt mir auch zwölf Riesen,
Die müssen noch stärker sein,
Als wie der heil'ge Christoph
Im Dom zu Köln am Rhein.

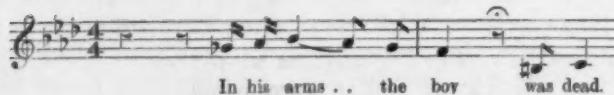
by

And bring me twal' great giants,
A' men o' muckle worth—
As strang as William Wallace
That looks across the Forth.

But it does not occur to some people (and others would not agree) that a similar truth to the spirit is required with the music. When Schubert writes



the essential thing is to get the emphatic words where *Armen*, *Kind*, and *tot* are; and it is quite unimportant whether the intervening notes are similarly detached or even are all there. Consequently, "The boy he held in his arms was dead," which preserves the note values intact, but puts "held" in the important place instead of "boy," may not be so good as



which leaves out one note, slurs two others which had been detached, and, for the reader (but not for the singer) truncates the metre.

Translators have sometimes also aimed and arrived at getting the vowels and consonants to correspond very nearly with the original. But why? Those who know the original to that extent would never be content with any translation, and those who do not would not in the least appreciate its merits. No doubt Rückert meant his first line, with its smooth vowel sounds,

Du bist die Ruh, der Friede mild,

to set the mood of his poem; and a translation may with advantage follow him, but not at the expense of other much more important things. Mr. Corder was the high priest of this vowel and consonant worship, and, to do him justice, he wrote at a time when the stage

which the Wagner cult had reached demanded that sort of thing. But now, in cold blood, why are Brangäne's first words in *Tristan*,

Blaue Streifen stiegen im Westen auf,

better represented by "Blue stripes," which preserves the sound, than by "Blue streaks," which might, with the proper context, give the right sense?

Song-translation involves eventually a bigger issue. Opera will never seriously take root in this country until we sing it in English that really is English. Libretto-translation has, of course, a technique of its own, and demands a considerable acquaintance with the actor's art, and a clear knowledge of how much suitable gesture will allow the poet to omit. Its greatest successes would probably be attained in adaptation and paraphrase, rather on the eighteenth century pattern. Its greatest difficulties are at such moments as the one in *Tristan* we have mentioned, or that when Brünnhilde awakens in *Siegfried*; and for these the much closer technique of song-translation will be an excellent preparative. If a school of song-translators were to arise, truly co-operative and mutually critical, they would go some way towards solving this larger problem. But they must take their art seriously. And if singers would weigh the argument about personality and would make use of good translations where they can find them or as they come into existence, and audiences would make up their minds about songs in foreign languages, the question of providing acceptable translations would become much easier.

This paper is of unconscionable length, and yet it has not—luckily, perhaps—said all there is to be said. But there is one thing to add to it. Translators will always be criticised for the omission of those things they were not trying to include; they are not always given credit for what they succeeded in including. What is the order of importance, then, of the points they should aim at? In my opinion, this—

(1) The translation must be poetry or, if that is out of reach, at least fluent and interesting verse which manages to disguise the fact that it is not an original poem.

(2) It may alter the lengths of the composer's notes provided it does not destroy his phrase; but, apart from this, it must never put the singer in any difficulty about his accented note nor propound to him difficult vocal problems.

(3) If it pretends to translate, it must translate; but an adaptation is sometimes more to the point, or is even imperative, and then the translator should be given complete discretion and be judged by his result.

(4) He must rhyme if the form of the stanza makes rhyme expected; but this is the case less often than might be supposed. If the sense is good, it is wonderful how the sound will take care of itself, when sung.

(5) Vowels and consonants which are appropriate in some way to the sense are, and those which preserve the sounds of the original may be, an advantage to the music of the verse; but this advantage is a luxury to be sought for only when the other conditions have been fulfilled.

(6) It is quite unimportant that the translation should, as regards its form, read well on paper, though even that may have its reward in attracting a singer's eye.

A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS.

A WEBER CENTENARY

(First Performance of *Der Freischütz*, Berlin, June 18, 1821)

THERE are some works of art towards which one's feelings never change, except in so far as they become deeper and one's understanding of them more intimate with every new contemplation. There are others about which it seems impossible to make up one's mind with any permanence. One may make mistakes of judgment, one may be carried away by a momentary whirl of enthusiasm, or at a first acquaintance fail to perceive beauties that lie below the surface. One's judgment changes often with the course of years as one learns more, not about the work of art itself, but about its surroundings. Yet it is not cases such as these that I would contrast with those about which there seems no possibility of a change of view. It is possible to know a work through and through, to feel perfectly clear in one's mind as to its historical value, and yet never to be quite certain whether one adores or detests it. Such a work, to me at any rate, is *Der Freischütz*. About *Fidelio* or *Così fan tutte* I have never wavered since I first saw them, and that is so long ago that I cannot conceive it possible that I should ever fail to delight in them. My enjoyment of *Der Freischütz* seems to depend purely on caprice or chance. It is not dependent on the merits of an individual performance; I have seen so many odd performances of opera in odd places that I can easily switch off all critical consideration of the manner of execution. It is a question of temperament; one must be in the mood for *Der Freischütz*, and I never know whether I am in the mood for it until it is too late to enter the theatre or leave it. Indeed, the mood may change even in the course of one performance.

It may be said that this is not serious criticism. "The jury want none of the impressions on your mind." But serious criticism it is, however incompletely expressed. For I can think of no other opera, among those which we should all agree to class as great works, which refuses so persistently to submit to ordered judgment. In this respect *Der Freischütz* seems to stand absolutely alone. Its bewildering elusiveness in the face of criticism is evidently the result of some peculiar and essential quality in the work itself. It is of no particular importance that it should produce such an impression on me, but it is

important that I should do my best to analyse the impression and reduce it if possible to terms of common sense.

It is of course obvious that *Der Freischütz* is typically romantic and typically German. We English people are all romantic by birth, and by education classical. It is part of our intellectual vanity to be perpetually fighting down the romanticist within us. We gave birth to the whole romantic movement, we produced the man whom probably every Continental critic would pick out as the great symbolic figure of that movement—Byron. And Byron, apart from the Letters and from *Don Juan*, is just the poet whom no modern Englishman can possibly read. The sword outwears its sheath, as he sang: Euphorion soars eternally in the spirit, but his cast-off clothes have begun to look rather shabby. It is the fatal curse of romanticism that it grows old like a garment. It is because Germany is nakedly and unashamedly romantic that we laugh at Germany. We have tried to conceal our own innate romanticism; it has become atrophied into sentimentality. There is nothing left for us but to pretend that we are indifferent to romance and regard it as merely ridiculous. And one cannot in considering *Der Freischütz* separate what is romantic from what is German. Art has nothing to do with politics. Germany is my "spiritual home," as it is for every English musician who has reached or passed middle life. But "home"—is there any place that English people in practical daily life hate more? It is much more satisfactory to sentimentalize about it at a distance. The psychological situation is at this moment singularly clear to me, for I write these lines in Berlin, rejoicing at one moment to have escaped at last from England, and at the next oppressed and rebellious in a land where I can hardly hear any music except that of Beethoven and Brahms. Thank goodness that the State Opera has announced that it is impossible to perform any work of Weber's, because the old scenery is in rags and the management cannot afford to renew it.

One's attitude to Germanism in music is necessarily a shifting thing, as one's attitude must be to anything that is local and not universal. One must approach local art with good will; yet even good will does not seem to be always enough. To enter properly into the spirit of *Der Freischütz* I think I should like to see *Hänsel und Gretel* the evening or the afternoon before. For *Hänsel und Gretel* is no less essentially German than *Der Freischütz*; but there is to me this difference between the two—that whereas I cannot enter into *Der Freischütz* without first putting myself consciously and deliberately into a German frame of mind, fortified by all the miscellaneous historical knowledge of German romanticism that I have been able to scrape up since I first began to read German, I have only to hear the

overture to *Hänsel und Gretel* and Humperdinck has carried my heart off to Germany whether it will or no. To most English musicians, I think, Humperdinck stands for all the happiest and the most lovable associations which have united Germany and England. Yet I cannot help the question rising faintly in my mind—are we just as far from the right track as the travelling English spinster who *schwärms* for Giotto and dear Saint Francis of Assisi in a land which would vastly prefer her to embrace Gabriele d'Annunzio and Marinetti?

Humperdinck gives us German childhood, and childhood is more or less international. But if we put our little hands in his he can lead us to the edge of something less easy for the foreigner to penetrate—the German forest. We all love German fairy-tales: we were all brought up on Grimm. Yet *das Märchen* means to the German mind something more. It has a sense, which the German mind never completely shakes off, of mystery and fear. And that sense of mystery and fear is nowhere deeper than in *der deutsche Wald*. It is by this track that we must approach *Der Freischütz*, for the real hero of *Der Freischütz* is not Max, but the forest itself. We have woods in England, but not the same romantic feeling for them. Robin Hood and Herne the Hunter are to most of us very vague conceptions. Herne the Hunter exists for us only in the pages of Harrison Ainsworth, and Harrison Ainsworth could hardly have written "Windsor Castle" if *Der Freischütz* had not taken London by storm a few years earlier. It is not much use reading about *der Wald*: we must know it as a positive spiritual experience. An English wood is a place where you pick primroses or sit for hours in a ditch watching with a pair of field-glasses on the chance of seeing a vixen and cubs. In a German forest there comes suddenly a moment of stillness—a bird's cry—and you suddenly have the inner conviction that if you only knew the right word to say you would find the birds and animals all talking to you in a familiar language. You start for a walk in the late afternoon: the sky clouds over, sunset is earlier than you had expected, it is so much darker in the wood than outside. There are paths cut through, radiating from centres, each with its name written upon a label; but the labels are stuck so high up on the tree trunks that even if you had a match you could not read them. And if you could, you would be none the wiser. All you can do is to go on, hoping that the path will lead you ultimately either to Munich or to Berlin. Besides, somewhere on the way there is sure to be a wood-cutter's cottage inhabited by seven dwarfs or three bears. You come to a fence; of one thing you can be quite sure—*Eingang verboten*—but you must either get over it or go back. An owl hoots—you remember Schumann's *Vogel als Prophet*. It is all there in the *Waldscenen*—the entrance, so attractive and inviting, the primroses, and then, as

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you go deeper, the sense of horror. Did you realize that to Schumann a bird was a prophet and the prophet of evil? The German forest is not for Sunday afternoon field-naturalists from English country houses. Something four-legged and black rushes across the path; it must be the wild boar out of the *Wolfschlucht*. All roads lead somewhere—here's a wall! you follow it—the moon comes out and shows you a cemetery. That shadow there—the moon is so uncertain—was that a man, or two men, scrambling over? Did you hear a voice say *Ribaldo, audace, lascia ai morti la pace*? Suddenly there is a shriek, a flash, a gathering roar—and you find yourself at the back of the railway station—you have only to skip across the line, hoping that no official will see you, and you are back at your hotel.

Weber has always been regarded as the typical representative of German romanticism in music, but even in music he was preceded by one whose musical achievements have been overshadowed by his literary productions—E. T. A. Hoffmann. Hoffmann's intimate understanding of music is obvious to all who read his stories; it is less generally known that he was a composer himself. A great composer he was not: his music has been almost completely forgotten. But music was the passion of his life, and it was always his keenest hope to produce a musical masterpiece. In 1811 there was published Fouqué's fairy tale, *Undine*. Hoffmann seized upon it at once as material for an opera, began to arrange a libretto and to make designs for the scenery, for he was a painter as well as a writer and composer, Fouqué was delighted with both the book and the sketches. By the end of 1813 the music was completed, and thanks largely to Fouqué's influence with the Court, the opera was performed at Berlin in August, 1816. It had an extraordinary success and was given more than twenty times; but in 1817 the opera house was burnt to the ground with all its costumes and scenery. Except for an unsuccessful performance at Prague, Hoffmann's *Undine* never again re-appeared on the stage.

Undine is not a great work, but it deserves remembrance as the first German romantic opera. It is strange that Hoffmann, who was so ardent a devotee of Italian music, should in this work have shown himself an essentially German composer. He is the connecting link between Mozart and Weber. Viewed from a purely musical standpoint, he derives much from Beethoven, and it is the combination of Beethoven's sense of pure musical expression with the dramatic sense of Mozart that made German romantic opera possible. The pity was that neither Hoffmann nor even Weber possessed more than the first insight into its possibilities.

Weber had a wonderful sense of the stage, but very little sense of drama; in music he had unlimited facility and brilliance, but the

moment we recall the works of Beethoven, Weber appears unendurably trivial and meretricious. His artistic character was the natural outcome of his ancestry and environment. His father, Franz Anton von Weber, born in 1734, was descended from a noble family of some distinction. When quite a young man he was taken up by the Elector Palatine Karl Theodor on account of his personal attractions and his musical abilities. He was given a military commission with the understanding that he was to make himself useful in dramatic entertainments. He quarrelled with the Elector, married a rich wife, and soon ran through all her money. His was a life of perpetual roving, perpetual financial embarrassment. He was himself a sort of stage Bohemian, hero for a romantic novel, combining the vanity of an officer and a gentleman with the vanity of a musician, an actor and a vagabond. When Carl Maria was born—the son of his second wife—he happened to be in the service of the Prince Bishop of Lübeck and Eutin, but he did not stay at Eutin for long. We hear of him in 1787 as becoming a Freemason at Hamburg: later at Vienna, Nürnberg, Salzburg—even his grandson could hardly trace the record of his wanderings. His entry into Freemasonry links him up with other theatrical wanderers like Schikaneder and Giesecke, as well as with the greater names of the age of enlightenment. Carl Maria, lame like Byron, grew up in the theatre. His playfellows were the children of other actors and musicians. Wherever they were, the theatre was their home and their playground. Weber's early years were saturated with the smell of the stage, the stage in its most practical and mechanical aspect, not the temple of the muses as it might be imagined by intellectual subscribers in the stalls, but the back-yard of daily routine as lived by actors, dressers and scene-shifters. His father had hoped that one of his sons might be a second infant Mozart; so the boy was pushed forward to composition before he had grasped the groundwork of harmony. His progress in music not being fast enough to please his father, he must become a painter, and tackle oils and lithography before he had learnt the elements of drawing.

Mozart could at least enjoy the teaching of Padre Martini. Weber was put to school with another clerical musician, Mozart's *bête noire*, the Abbé Vogler. Weber's son and biographer points out a certain resemblance of character between Vogler and Franz Anton von Weber—both passionately devoted to music, both eaten up with vanity and both equally ready to let pinchbeck pass for gold. Had Vogler been brought up in Court and military circles, says Max von Weber, he would have become just such a man as Franz Anton. It will be remembered that Vogler's other distinguished pupil was Meyerbeer. During the period of Weber's studies Vogler's mind was entirely taken

up with his own opera *Samori*, which was produced at Vienna in 1804 and considered vastly superior to Beethoven's *Leonore*, which appeared 19 months later. Weber was set to make the pianoforte arrangement of it: young people must learn to be useful to their elders.

In spite of indifferent health, Weber inherited his father's attractive qualities. He was good looking and sang charmingly to the guitar. Vienna has always been the ideal city for those who are young enough to enjoy life. Weber enjoyed it to the full, inseparable from his devoted friend Gänsbacher, a young officer a few years older than himself. At the age of eighteen he went as Kapellmeister to Breslau, where he was looked askance at by the local aristocracy because he was a musician and by the *bourgeoisie* because he was an aristocrat. In 1807 he went to Stuttgart as secretary to a minor royalty with a not very savoury reputation. The extravagance of the Elector Karl had been a public scandal in the eighteenth century, and after a short period of restraint, King Frederick seemed now to be reviving the old style of reckless magnificence. It was a life such as England had hardly known since the days of James I. The royal hunting parties devastated the countryside. People could still remember such things as actual matters of fact when they saw the wild hunt go tearing across the stage of the Berlin Opera in 1821. If any musician ever had the chance of becoming a spoilt child it was Weber. As far as personal character was concerned, he passed through this life of pomps and vanities unharmed: it has always been recorded of him that he was one of the most lovable of men. But it is well to bear in mind the social surroundings in which he grew up, for they seem to explain much in his musical personality that we cannot in these days wholeheartedly admire. He reflects his age and his environment, and that is why one has to be in the right mood to listen to his music, as one might have to be in the right mood to make a night of it among his friends. Even Hoffmann must have felt himself subjected to the same sense of caprice. He was present at that memorable first night, postponed after much worry and intrigue to June 18, which Weber cheerfully accepted as a good omen because it was the anniversary of Waterloo. After the opera he went on with Weber and his circle to supper, flashing out one jest after another until he disappeared suddenly beneath the table. Probably no one was surprised at that happening, but he vanished into limbo only to rise again like Dr. Miracle, standing behind Weber's chair and dropping a huge wreath of laurels on his head with the characteristic observation, "Doesn't he look just like Tasso?" What did surprise Weber somewhat painfully was that a few days later Hoffmann published a criticism of *Der Frieschütz* in the *Vossische Zeitung* in which he pointed out how much Weber owed to the music of Spontini, and remarked, too,

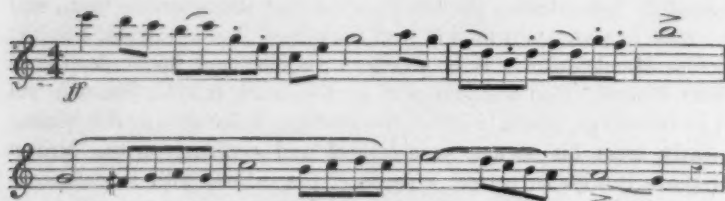
that the bits which were derived from Spontini were much the best in the opera. And even Weber's son admits the truth of the criticism.

We cannot always be roaming through the German forest or always drinking champagne. There are days when one wood looks very much like another, nights when the champagne is merely sweet and indigestible, not to say deplorably flat as well. We know as we drink it that, like Hoffmann, we shall have a headache the next morning. We can only drink it as a not very successful German attempt to manufacture an imitation of *Asti spumante*. The real stuff came from Pesaro. With *Tancredi* Rossini had made the conquest of the world. Rossini and the Italian opera dominate the whole of German romantic music, except perhaps that of Schumann. But the Germans mixed Rossini into a peculiar quality of harmony, warm, fleshy, sentimental. German critics tell me that this sentimental harmony which still forms the basis of German music is in its essence not German, but Jewish. Certainly Mendelssohn exhibits it in its most characteristic form, and we tend to associate it mainly with his name. But it existed, I think, before Mendelssohn. It is present in Spohr, and Spohr derived it from Mozart. You will find it in *La Clemenza di Tito*, you will find it in *Idomeneo*, and it is one of the qualities which distinguish Mozart clearly from his Italian predecessors and contemporaries. Mozart employs it with so perfect a sense of proportion, with so delicate a nuance of brushwork that it is for him just a northern haze that now and then softens and etherealizes the hard Italian sunlight. Spohr and Mendelssohn exaggerate it: with Spohr it is a deliberate trick of the trade, with Mendelssohn just a bad habit, in Weber it merely happens by chance. He never mastered its technique, he was never altogether the slave of its insidious attraction; it is just part of his picturesque untidiness of mind. He ought to have been an Englishwoman, and Herrick would have made a poem about him. He has Byron's carelessness and Byron's impulsiveness.

Fascinated by Italian opera like all Germans, like all Germans from Bach onwards he feels its thrill—or at least tries to reproduce it—not vocally, but instrumentally. After the opera is over he has taken the pianoforte arrangement home with him, and it is at the pianoforte that it has sunk into his soul. Weber's familiar sonata in A flat is a summary of the whole of Weber, as it passes nonchalantly from one mood to another, and throughout almost its entire course we can trace the recollection of Rossini. But it is a hazy recollection, and the pianoforte can give only a thin suggestion of these voluptuous Italian melodies. Transferred from the voice to the instrument they seem to have lost their original glowing complexion; Rossini in his operas had

given us an exaggeration of life, Weber in his sonatas gives us but the stage in miniature.

Gustav Mahler, confronted with a performance of *Der Freischütz* at New York, burst out in horror with the question, "Have these people any idea of what it is to perform *Der Freischütz*? Don't they realise that it means bringing to life a whole epoch of music and culture?" He knew that to understand *Der Freischütz* and to make it understood of the people one must see it historically, one must put oneself and one's audience back into the musical, literary and social environment of Germany a hundred years ago. And that means, as some German conductors do still understand, interpreting Weber in just the opposite way to that in which it is most obvious to interpret him. We all realize Weber's fiery impulsiveness, his brilliance and glitter, Consider the familiar phrase from the Overture to *Der Freischütz*:



How difficult it is for us in these days not to feel it as the symbol of all that is flashy and vulgar! With the *fortissimo* of the orchestra its commonplace sequence of tonic and dominant is only emphasized. Rhythm, and rhythm of the most trivial type, overwhelms the sense of melody. Even the tune seems to amount to no more than the notes of the common chord and the chord of the dominant seventh. It is so dreadful that the only thing to do with it seems to be to hammer out the rhythm with such an onrush of energy that the mere rhythm shall carry all before it until the overture becomes little more than a frantic orgy of drums and brass. That is because we English people have no background of tradition against which to visualize the opera. The average German conductor has perhaps too much tradition. Hence an undistinguished performance of *Der Freischütz* in Germany is characterised by a dragging sentimentality that makes the opera unbearable to the casual Englishman in the audience. It seems to have lost even the false brilliance of the footlights, and its melody stands out as all the more vapid and puerile. But occasionally we may hear Weber conducted by one of the really great men. He knows that

brilliance will take care of itself if it is supported by dignity. Does the melody appear on paper too trivial? Then it must sing, and sing until it has acquired nobility. There is nothing paradoxical about such a reading of Weber. It is surely one of the most obvious principles of interpretation that the qualities which lie on the surface and are visible even to the least intelligent are just those on which insistence is least desirable. The function of the interpreter is to reveal what is behind them. And what lies behind Weber is the recollection sometimes of Beethoven and Mozart, but more often of Rossini and the golden age of Italian opera.

An Englishman is easily tempted to misjudge Weber, as an older generation of Englishmen were inclined to misjudge Mozart. For Weber is only his true self when on the stage. In England we see very little opera of any kind, and even to those Englishmen who have a passion for the musical drama there is a certain area of musical history, lying between Mozart and Wagner, which appears to be barren of operatic masterpieces. There is *Fidelio*, which we feel to be not so much one of the great operas as one of the great works of Beethoven. Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti have passed into oblivion. Meyerbeer has been held up to us as an awful warning. Marschner and Lortzing, Herold and Boïeldieu are mere local celebrities. The men whose music fills the gap between Beethoven and Wagner—Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Chopin—were complete failures as far as opera was concerned. Their influence on music in general, especially in England, has been so powerful that there somehow seems to have grown up a tradition that opera must be an inferior form of art or else they would not have passed it by almost unnoticed. If *Genoveva* is a dull work we blame the theatre for it and not Schumann. The tradition seems further to be corroborated by the fact that Weber's non-dramatic music is by no means up to the level of his better known contemporaries and followers. Yet all of them derived from Weber a perpetual inspiration. They drew upon him as he drew upon Rossini, throwing an ever deeper shade of German—or as some German critics would say, of Jewish—sentiment over his sunny half-Italian melodies. They failed as operatic composers, but they were no enemies to opera in general, or they would not have made even their own unfortunate attempts.

One may doubt whether *Der Freischütz*, for all its fine qualities, would have been kept alive to this day had it not been for Germany's untiring devotion to the classics, German or otherwise. In Germany every opera-house considers it a duty to put on *Der Freischütz* and to put it on as well as it can be done. In England our classical operas are still beloved of the people all over the country, but no manager ever takes any particular trouble about them. Such works as *The Bohemian*

Girl and *Maritana* are not even rehearsed: a new singer who joins the company is pitchforked on to the stage in an important part without the slightest preparation beyond what he may have gone through by himself in private. If any *impresario* would try the experiment of re-studying *Maritana* with an entirely unprejudiced cast of singers, with a careful and thorough consideration of the orchestral score, and with costumes and decorations designed afresh by a genuinely artistic hand, we might find that ancient opera not quite so ridiculous and provincial as it is generally considered to be. There is little chance, I fear, of the centenary of *Der Freischütz* being made the occasion of any special performance in this country; but we might at any rate take to heart the lesson of German example and apply it to our own operatic style.

EDWARD J. DENT.



HERMANN VON HELMHOLTZ

From an engraving by C.H. Jeens, 1867, kindly lent by
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HERMANN VON HELMHOLTZ

1821—1894.

IN spite of all that has happened since his death, perhaps even because of it, it is fitting that we should refresh our memories with some record of the character and works of one of the greatest of Germany's scientists.

The value of science is ultimately intrinsic; it is a good whose relation to us is our enjoyment of it, however many gifts of comfort and usefulness it may shower upon us ere we reach the disinterested pleasures of its contemplation. Art lifts us to these sublime values at once and grants us none but these. But every real scientist knows this secret glory of art in his own work. It forms a common ground and bond between men of all nations. It is this inner sympathy that makes brethren of all those who have passed for even a little time from the dominating possessive phases of life to its contemplative and æsthetic values. However much the nations into which scientists, as well as artists, are born may debase the gifts and powers of the spirit to instruments of destruction and hatred, yet we all feel that sin against this holy spirit has been committed until instinct and emotion work with knowledge and beauty to link all men together. And so no secular hatred and defilement may restrain us from homage to a noble and valiant mind.

For such was von Helmholtz, a man of transcendent intellect, of a calm and generous disposition, a son of Europe as much as he was loyally devoted to his own land.

Hermann Helmholtz was born in the pleasant little town of Potsdam (where so many evil deeds have been planned) on the 31st of August, 1821. His parents were both vigorous and able persons who lived to a goodly age. In the Gymnasium of the place his father's teaching covered the wide ground of classics, German, mathematics and physics. Officially the man himself was held to possess an excellent æsthetic education, based upon extensive literary studies, to be inspired with general scientific interest and to show a thoroughly formed inner individuality. His mother was a woman of keen intelligence, the daughter of a Hanoverian officer of artillery, descended in male line from William Penn, of Pennsylvania fame, and in female line from a French family of refugees. Helmholtz's heredity was evidently a com-

bination of various strong forces, which well may yield a very high resultant, higher far than that produced by the alliance of superlative merit with a poor stock. There seems little doubt that this latter fate befell the next generation of his name. Some day perhaps our great men will be enabled by the progress of knowledge and by social sanctions to approach the decisive events of love and marriage with as deeply serious and far-seeing preparation as they now must give to art and science, ere they venture to claim the rights of creation therein.

Until his seventh year Hermann was a weakly child, constantly confined to house and bed. In fact the careful examination that was given to his cranium after death revealed the astounding certainty that he had passed through some degree of infantile hydrocephalus. But in spite of this early weakness he was mentally bright and keen. Strangely and prophetically a cousin of his father's saw in these disadvantages none but good omen. Frau Geheimer Oberfinanzrätin exclaimed in a letter to him, "You may be glad he has not learned much yet. I think it is a blessing the boy will only start to learn when he is eight, Alexander von Humboldt still knew nothing at eight, and only yesterday the King made him President of the Academy of Science with the title of Excellency and a very large salary—these are my great hopes for your son." Her friendly wishes must have been as real as the fairy gifts of the fables. And now before the entrance to the University buildings he last adorned with his presence stands Helmholtz's figure with a Humboldt on either side of him.

We are not surprised to find that for a number of years his position in school was at first backward and then hardly more than good. But he pulled up gradually level with his age and finally showed superior ability in his favourite subjects—physics and mathematics. Into the fields of purely scientific research he passed through the portals of medicine. And it was a humble arch that let him pass; for by contract of eight years' service with the military he bought for himself free schooling and maintenance in the medical institute. During all these years his health gradually improved until he attained the strength and endurance that enabled him till late in life to enjoy travel and mountaineering of more than ordinary strenuousness.

It is of interest here to notice his early zeal for music, carefully fostered and encouraged by his parents. On his transference to the medical schools we find his father in his first letter warning him not to be overwhelmed by the virtuosity displayed by his room-mate, and especially not to be tempted to leave the making of music entirely to him. For just so had he in his own young days forgotten all he knew. "And be specially careful not to let the titillations and dazzle of the new Italian fatuities spoil your taste for the deep spiritual German and

classical music. The former are seductive, the latter is educative." Helmholtz replied that there need be no fear of his neglecting music, for he had found that he could only deeply hear by making his own music and he had far more pleasure in it then than when he merely listened to someone else's performance and expression. These early thoughts and records hardly reveal in Helmholtz greater devotion to music than might be expected from any well educated German boy. In other lands where good musicianship is still widely held to be rather an effeminate trait in a man, the value put upon such powers might have been different.

Helmholtz's medical studies were brought to a worthy fruition in his Doctor's dissertation, "*De Fabrica Systematis Nervosi Evertebra-torum.*" It was still the rule that dissertations should be written in Latin, as it was in the days of Kant, and long before that. But the rule did not long remain compulsory. Physiologists have unanimously held this histological work to be an important part of the foundations of the physiology and pathology of the nervous system. Strangely enough his degree was awarded with only the lowest degree of praise, "*cum laude.*" Fifty years later when the jubilee of this doctorate was being celebrated, the praise had faded out of Helmholtz's memory to a mere pass (*ritè*). We do not know, and we can hardly now understand, why the award was not "*summa cum laude*," seeing that the professor in charge was Johannes Müller. Perhaps the poverty of Helmholtz's equipment and his being merely a bursar had something to do with it. Anyhow we rejoice that he began his career, as a great man should, by attaining more in his work than his judges could at once recognise.

How crowded with work these years of medical study seem to have been! Besides the now usual scientific and medical courses, he attended classes on natural philosophy, psychology, logic, æsthetics, Latin and French language, and history. And yet he found time and energy to read the masterpieces of mathematical thought and so to raise himself to a pinnacle from which he was presently to swoop forth with ease and power to the amazement of all his colleagues. However much we may feel that the students of preceding generations had so much less to learn than ourselves, because so much has been discovered since, there can have been no great difference. For the space must have been well filled out with the many now dissipated mists of theory and discussion, things that a youthful student finds far harder to master than the schemes of a well prepared and clear cut science. The latter can be learnt by a good student in a few weeks. The former is a jargon that the careless may glibly learn to use, but that presents the greatest hindrances to the progressive mind. But the general attitude to the problems of natural science that Helmholtz was doubtless then pre-

paring, and that later formed the introduction to his first famous treatise and became the text for all scientists of his day, may well have helped him lightly to pass over much useless thought and so to reserve his energy for studies that would later surely lead him forward with greater speed. Is this attitude perhaps the secret of the "*cum laude*" reserve? Theorists and men of principles were in disfavour at that time as we see from the fact that his great theoretical work on the conservation of energy was refused a place in the scientific journal to which it was sent by its sponsor, and had to be published as a separate pamphlet.

His next investigation found him burrowing at the roots of another science not then in sight—bacteriology. But his contribution was not so centrally fundamental this time. There followed a third experimental work that established a loss of substance in muscular action and two articles on physiological warmth. Then no doubt partly from behind his thoughts on these researches—we now approach such questions with it ready to hand in our minds as a principle of thought—and on the basis of his long mathematical self-discipline came his famous theoretical paper on the "Conservation of Energy," that startled the world and raised him at once to the first rank of its deepest and most comprehensive thinkers.

The further complex and varied course of his works may be conveniently told as it stands in the address made to him by the Berlin Academy on the jubilee of his Doctorate. In an article intended for a wide public, giving an account of the interaction of natural forces, and as a corollary to the Kant-Laplace theory of the planetary system, a theory that Helmholtz himself had notably extended, he gave the first satisfactory explanation of the sun's warmth. But in the midst of these deep theoretical studies he did not relax his progress in experiment. For while Johannes Müller bewailed the impossibility of ascertaining in the confined space of the animal body anything about the rate of transmission of nerve force, which he thought of the order of that of light, Helmholtz showed that its rate was only a tenth of that of sound in air and that a latent period intervened between stimulation and response. Experiments of such accuracy had never before been conceived in physiology. About the same time he stepped forth as a bold pioneer in the physiology of the senses. The images we see in each other's eyes had merely been the concern of painter and poet. But by measurement of their changes he solved the old puzzle of the accommodation of the eye for vision at different distances. In the spectroscope he created a tool of infinite practical importance for the study of the eye and its diseases and spread his name as a benefactor of mankind throughout the world. This invention was all the more meritorious since it lay so near to hand and yet so far beyond the dreams of all other

men. His study of colour dispelled the erroneous spectral theory and revived Thomas Young's almost forgotten interpretation. After fundamental researches in physical acoustics he strove valiantly with two ancient problems of physiological acoustics—the Pythagorean mystery of consonance and dissonance and the problem of timbre, the latter of which he solved beyond further possibility of doubt. And so beside his *Physiological Optics* he set his wonderful work on the *Sensations of tone as a physiological basis for the theory of music*, the one a worthy companion to the other. From consideration of the sea-waves rolling on the shore of his East Prussian home he passed into hydrodynamics. And from transcendent studies in this subject emerged his theory of vortex movements, that emboldened Lord Kelvin to the hazard of his hypothesis that the atoms of matter are extraordinarily small, eternally revolving vortex rings of many knots. Through all these works, embracing the whole of theoretical science, there ran, moreover, the most penetrating occupation with that ubiquitous substance, electricity.

But need we follow the details any farther? Our minds are dazzled by the further array of subjects and problems successfully attacked by this master's thought—animal electricity, theory of electrodynamics, the principle of minimal action, the electromagnetic theory of colour dispersion, meteorology, the basis of geometry, even the theory of knowledge. And the majority of these works were in no sense compilations or mere discussions, but permanent and decisive contributions to knowledge and understanding. As the Academy said, it is impossible within ordinary limits to give a proportionate picture of the world of facts and explanations, of observations, experiments and thoughts, that flowed from his commanding analysis, his instrumental construction and manipulation, and his untiring industry.

Astonishment is only increased when we remember the external forms of his official career. Beginning as a military doctor, he first taught plastic anatomy at the Berlin Academy of Arts, then in Königsberg physiology and pathology, in Bonn anatomy and physiology, and in Heidelberg physiology alone. There was no precedent in German universities to his next step to the chair of physics in Berlin. The final extension of his influence lay in the foundation and direction of the physical technical institute of Charlottenburg.

Helmholtz's character endeared him to all who knew him or came under his influence. There was nothing of the pompous and overbearing "Geheimrädler" about him. "I had no idea he was so simple and unassuming," folks exclaimed who caught a glimpse of him on holiday or travel. Germans seem to expect their thinkers to "show something of the Professor" even at odd moments on holiday, so there

is all the greater merit in abstinence from this style of parade. His works are written in a spirit of modest gratitude to those who cleared the ground on which his great talents enabled him to build. Referring at the end of the second section of his *Sensations of Tone* to Rameau and D'Alembert, he wrote: "It is astonishing what these two thinkers effected with the scanty materials at their command, and what a clear, precise, comprehensive system the old vague and lumbering theory of music became under their hands. If I have myself been able to present something more complete I owe it merely to the circumstance that I had at command a large mass of preliminary physical results that had accumulated in the century that has since elapsed." His relations to his lamented pupil Hertz, who made the famous discovery of the wave motion of electricity, were touchingly generous.

England and Scotland he often visited, being on terms of intimacy with Lord Kelvin and most of the physicists and chemists of his time. He repeatedly joined the meetings of the British Association, and greatly admired the interest in them shown by the public of both sexes. We read with pleasure of a visit to St. Andrews, when his first golf strokes were, as usual, quite successful, but the rest struck either earth or air. Faraday, whom he styles the first physicist of England and of Europe, he described as simple, amiable and unassuming as a child. "So winsome a nature I have never yet seen in any man."

"England is a great land and one feels here what a splendid and noble thing civilisation is when it has spread into every smallest relation of life." Surely we cannot think that so simple and generous a heart as this would in these later decades have stooped to envious and hateful emotions. His was not the arrogance that affects with bravado to despise what it most envies. How curious it is to find that in 1865—two years after the publication of his work on tones—Oxford desired to call him as professor of physics, but could not raise more than £700, "more indeed than we get in Heidelberg, but hardly enough to live in England with the same comfort." And so, he says, he found it quite natural that Professor Max Müller declared he could tell them definitely Helmholtz would not come for that. But would he not have come for more? A pity, perhaps, that fate had not interchanged these two names and personalities.

Alas! for the brevity of human generation, Helmholtz's name died with his sons, so early deceased. Robert gave most promise of having inherited his powers, but died just as they came to fruition. He did not share with his father that vigour of constitution that alone can bear a man through life to such achievements. Helmholtz's first wife died of phthisis after ten years of married life. His second survived him.

One of the many sciences of which Helmholtz laid the foundations

was that of music. He looked at the subject from all its aspects, and gave each of them the benefit of his penetrating analysis and vast industry and erudition. His experimental exploration of the ground was both deep and extensive. As everyone admits, his analysis of tone-colour was in principle complete. True, it has been refined and finished in recent years by such work as D. C. Miller's, but only by virtue of the vastly greater wealth of instrumental technique now available. And such work, though new of course in so far as it is complete and thus technically applicable, adds very little to the general scientific theory of the constitution of timbre given by Helmholtz. His observations on vowel structure have also proved as accurate as they were ingenious. Recent research of a more complete kind has confirmed them over against various intervening attempts. But his acoustical work was of the greatest importance on the physiological as well as on the physical and mathematical side. In spite of all the criticism that has been brought to bear upon his "theory of hearing" in these fifty years since its publication, it still stands as the favourite theory of the mechanical action of the ear. The most recent issue of the *British Journal of Psychology* contains an article upholding the principle of resonance that forms the core of his theory. There are many rival theories on the stage of discussion, but Helmholtz's overbears them all by virtue of the thorough organisation he gave to it in all its aspects, mathematical, physical, anatomical, physiological, psychological and musical, and by force of the great prestige it gains from his name. The others, however much better they may be in some part or principle, or in their relation to the psychological facts of hearing and of music, are but flimsy, diaphanous structures that do not greatly impress the average reader of education. They remain the possession and enthusiasm of specialists, who are more concerned with the strength of the essential foundations than with the impressive completeness of the building; but Helmholtz's theory is the only one the world sees as it walks and travels about. Not only so, but many careful students still think his foundations have not yet been bettered, however insufficient they may clearly be for the permanent support of the palace of music.

The most damaging criticism of all perhaps has been applied to Helmholtz's psychological theories. They were not absolutely new in his hands. Both his theory of dissonance by beating partials and his theory of consonance by coincident partials had been propounded before him by the French savants Sauveur and Estève. But Helmholtz really first gave the suggestions full body and life. But neither theory, however plausible and sufficient it may seem, can stand rigorous examination. To begin with it is anomalous that two theories should be required for what is evidently one group of musical phenomena. Why one

theory for consonance and another for dissonance? Against the former the criticism was very soon brought by Fechner that it seemed to be contradicted by the apparent consonance of tones that are devoid of partials. How could consonance between two pure tones be felt if consonance were due to the coincidence of the partials of tones? Of course it is a well-known fact that is difficult to produce a really pure tone; weak first and second harmonics and various very high ones are nearly always present. So Helmholtz appealed in various examples to the supplementing function of memory. The solid form of an object can only be apprehended properly with the combined use of the two eyes. But so much remains of its form when we look at it with one eye, or when we see a picture of it, that the memory is enabled to add the rest, so that the effect may be hardly distinguishable from the binocular view of the real object. Thus memory can help us well over those occasions on which the special differentiating features of an object are not present. And then, after all, melody in pure tones that have only weak remnants of partials, is not full-blooded melody, but only a feeble copy that the memory can just recognise.

Memory in Helmholtz's day had not been so carefully studied as had the sensations. It does not seem so clearly to be almost a part of the physical world with a definite structure of its own, capable even of mathematical manipulation. It is one of the inner powers of mind that so often run counter to the demands of nature. But the intervening advances of psychological theory compel us to put the same strictness into our scientific dealings with these powers as into the objects and the sensory phenomena of the outside world. And we can no more expect memory to work by mere habit when its foundation is withdrawn than we can hope to run an old locomotive without heat.

Such criticism of this theory of consonance and many others directed upon the various aspects of his psychological constructions have shown that whatever may hold good for his physiological theory of hearing his psychological theory does not provide an adequate basis for the scientific explanation of music. Nevertheless Helmholtz will always remain one of the greatest names in this province of knowledge. Rameau did very much in his time, but he lacked such scientific genius and training. His merits were rather those of the systematic simplification of knowledge and the untiring zeal of a seeker after a sort of mystic truth. But great indeed was the progress he made, greater in its relations to music than anything that has ever since been accomplished. Helmholtz's work has done little or nothing to alter the exposition given to their art by musicians. On the contrary, it may be said to have entangled them for a time with irrelevant and confusing notions and substructures that musicians in these latter decades have happily

weeded out with bold resolve. The suggestive power of prestige has disadvantages that are often the last of its effects that show themselves.

In physics and mathematics great masses of facts had been gathered ere Helmholtz appeared, and many attempts had been made to approach the vision of a logical self-evolving system of matter. These syntheses and sketches awaited the advent of some mind powerful enough to grasp them adequately and to breathe into them the vigour of rapid and beautiful growth. But in psychology Helmholtz found no such fertile ground for his thought, and though his hypotheses were clear and logical in themselves, they lacked the cutting edge of an inner vision disciplined in all the branches of mind study, and they were not beaten into their purest and fundamental forms.

All honour then to the greatest thinker, observer, and experimentalist of the science of music of the whole nineteenth century. The only other who can be set beside him in respect of this one science, his compatriot Stumpf, belongs largely to the present century and being still in active production is excluded from the count.

HENRY J. WATT.

SOME THOUGHTS ON OPERA LIBRETTO

OPERA is the union of the art of drama with the art of music. The art of drama, which joins with music to make opera, is in itself a composite art, which appeals to the sense of sight and the sense of hearing. So long as the drama is confined to the sense of sight, its union with music presents no theoretical difficulty. The history of the union of music with warlike procession, dance, and other fundamentally religious forms of drama begins very early in the history of man; and it has followed a fairly smooth course, because it is easily possible for human beings to observe with the eye and the ear at the same time, and because the performers have to render either the music or the drama, not both together. The difficulty begins when, with the use of words in drama, a double test is demanded of the performers and a double appeal is made to a single sense in the percipients. Immediately, the questions arise whether either of the two languages—speech and music—needs the other, can gain anything from the other, or can, indeed, be reconciled with the other.

Yet the attempt to reconcile the two must be almost as old as the existence of either. Some time very early indeed in the history of our race, men and women must have discovered that they could get more into their words if they sang them than if they spoke them. The result was the birth and growth of song. It is much easier to unite speech and music in a song, which, in principle, is a straightforward expression of a single emotion between definite lines, than in a dramatic work, where the demands upon the two arts give each the opportunity to assert itself at the expense of the other. But, in practice, it is impossible to distinguish sharply between the lyric and the dramatic. There is something dramatic in every song. There must be contrast—between this line and that, or between this stanza and that, in mood, or weight, or implication; and every such contrast sets up a conflict between the music, with its form, and the poem, with its form. (A certain very popular concert singer of the present day has, indeed, made his reputation by letting the music go hang and "plumping" for the drama.) The lyric can never flow perfectly straight and simple. Yet song has been achieved. No one needs to be reminded of an old friend like "O God, our help in ages past," or of certain songs by Campion or others of his time, or of "Who is Sylvia?"

or of "Feldeinsamkeit" and many another. We are constantly hearing songs, new and old, in which the union of the two arts is perfect, the words bringing to the music a definite content and application; the music fitting so closely to the words that from one aspect it seems a mere emphasis, a heightening of the emotional intensity, while from another aspect it is seen to be enlarging the scope of the poem until it reaches domains in the half-explored kingdom of man to which poetry alone cannot carry.

Even song is a convention—a coming together of two separate entities. But it was a union ardently desired by both parties. No musician but has wanted to make use of that effective instrument of music, the human voice, and to go to words to find exactness for the idea that he will express in his own language; and the lyrical poets have been so eager to have their poems joined to music that even a poet who was so little of a musician as Wordsworth says of the various kinds of lyrical poetry that "for the production of their full effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable."

Between drama and music the union has never been so happy as between lyric and music. Yet drama has always shown itself eager for marriage with music. If all poetry is "aspiring to the condition of music," a signal instance of the effort is what we call "poetic drama." In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare is trying to get as near to opera as ever he can; he is trying to make his words give by themselves the emotional intensity, the colour, the suggestion and the spiritual implications which music, alone among the arts, can freely give. The speech of poetic drama is conventional, in the sense of being far removed from even such rhythmical and heightened utterance as Wordsworth noticed in common people under stress of excitement. Yet it is a convention so easily and widely accepted that the further step, the introduction of music herself, might seem almost devoid of theoretical or practical difficulty. In effect, the story of the union of drama and music is the story of a long fight, tempered with moments of passionate agreement—each partner having so complex, various and individual a nature to assert against the other that harmony seems impossible, and one is always trying to push the other out of its way.

Readers of *Music and Letters* will know the history of opera much better than the present writer can pretend to; but the story has always been told from the point of view of the musician, not from that of the dramatist. Historians of music seem to agree that from the drama, not from music, came the first advances. In the negotiations for marriage Bardi and his Florentine friends, one reads, were acting for the drama. They wanted to win for the drama the support from music

which they believed it to have enjoyed in the Attic theatre; and music was to do no more than heighten the effect of the words. But music had not long become possessed, so to speak, of the drama's inheritance before it began to proclaim itself the master and wanted to manage things in its own way. Melody, which is a distinct assertion of mastery, comes in pretty early in the seventeenth century; and after melody comes a still stronger assertion, *aria*. In Alessandro Scarlatti, with his two kinds of recitative and his judicious use of *aria*, the dramatic element in opera seems to have found a good master, but still a master. It had a better chance with Lulli and Rameau, because French dramatic poetry lends itself peculiarly well to treatment in recitative, and because the quality of the action in French serious drama tends to go in broad and simple lines. Through half the eighteenth century the tyranny of music grew in Italy (and therefore in England too) until the drama was all but swamped. The more one reads Metastasio, the more one admires his extraordinary skill in doing excellently well work in which Zeno all but failed and which Goldoni threw up in disgust. Metastasio took well-known stories, the development of which cost the audience little trouble to follow. He told them, on the whole, broadly and simply, without complications of plot or refinements of characterisation, putting as much emotion into them as he dared; and he managed to meet the demands of the musicians with amazing skill. He is bound to be wooden and inficete at times. For instance, ten minutes after the reader of *Achilles in Scyros* is admiring Deidamia's song at the end of Act I., Sc. ii., he is pitying an able dramatist for being forced to bungle it so over Arcas's song at the end of Act I., Sc. xiv. Arcas must have a song there, of course, or Arcas would have declined to appear, and the musical pedants of the time would have lamented the licence of a librettist, who, by ending a scene without a song, was striking at the foundations of the art of opera. But it is the path of pedantry, not of licence, which has led to the introduction into our modern "musical comedies" of many an American horror of sentiment or of rowdy din, because "you must have a number there"—the audience will expect it—and the leading lady or gentleman will insist upon it.

At one point in that gloomy period in the story of operatic drama (though it may have been, no doubt, a glorious period in the story of operatic music) there comes a sudden gleam of light. The more one thinks of *Dido and Aeneas*, the more of a miracle does it appear. The composer of *Dido and Aeneas* was one Henry Purcell. It is usually forgotten that the author was one Nahum Tate. No doubt Dryden and other English theorists had affirmed that the music of an opera must be continuous; but Dryden, in writing his own libretti, did not

give opportunity for following his own precept; and—except, perhaps, for *Albion and Albanus*—his “operas” are not operas at all. The parent of the English opera was the English masque, in which the music was incidental only, and not very dramatic. There was, then, no English example which could show Tate how to write a dramatic piece to which a composer could wed continuous music. Read by itself, Tate’s *Dido and Aeneas* is not a great dramatic work; but that is not the point. It is a dramatic work which was written to be joined with music, and which, when joined with music by a great composer who knew what an opera should be, made an opera perfect in its style. Purcell found no other libretto to equal that of *Dido and Aeneas*. The influence of the masque may be traced right through English opera to Bishop and Balfe, and to Gilbert and Sullivan in our day. Even our newly-adored *The Beggar’s Opera* is not truly an opera. It is a delightful play decorated with delicious music. England was invaded by that Italian opera at which the *Spectator* poked fun which, though trivial, is yet valid criticism still. When Arne put a translation of Metastasio’s *Artaxerxes* to music (in the year that saw Gluck’s *Orfeo*), the musicians declared that English was not a language suitable to recitative. And there was an end of that.

In general, the tyranny of music had become so strong that the dramatic element had either to admit music merely as decoration, or else to wither under it. Even so generously dramatic a composer as Handel could not find books worthy of his art in opera, though in oratorio he was well served. The demands of the individual singers only gave way before the demands of the concerted piece and the demands of the *finale*. Opera had to wait for Calzabigi and Gluck before the balance was restored. Gluck’s method gave his librettist a chance; and Calzabigi’s name is remembered where that of most of his servile kind are clean forgotten (thanks partly to the contempt of them shown by the music publishers and the writers of programmes, who seldom stoop to give the name of the author of the words). Mozart was better served by Da Ponte than his admirers are willing to recognise. In choosing *Le Mariage de Figaro*, Mozart chose a story of the kind which is perfectly self-supporting without music; a complicated, bustling story, which nowhere suggests music; and in adapting it Da Ponte and he were practically concerned to make room for the music. In *Don Giovanni* Da Ponte rescued, indeed, a noble story from the mire; but, except in the character of Leporello, which he clearly enjoyed setting out, he provides little more than a skeleton on which the music is to put all the flesh. Of the book of *Così fan Tutte*, the less said the better; and Mazzola’s adaptation of Metastasio, for *La Clemenza di Tito*, is the kind of thing to stretch any composer’s

faculties to the full. Then we come to Schikaneder and *Die Zauberflöte*. The libretto of this opera has been so decried that it seems temerarious folly to ask to-day whether this delicious, lyrical, absurd fairy-tale is not the very best book on which Mozart ever had to work; and whether the introduction of the freemasonry ideas, which were no part of the earliest plan, is not the very thing which detracts from the perfection of this opera. In all Mozart's operas—even in *Così fan Tutte*—the music is much more than a decoration for the drama; all have inexhaustible beauties in them, and the dramatic element in the music is marvellous; but this is not to say that they are perfect examples of the union of music and drama. Mozart, for his part, had sound ideas of opera. *Il Matrimonio Segreto* very soon showed what a less dramatic composer will make of an opera when too much is left to his inadequate powers. In most cases, when the difficulty of uniting music and drama becomes too great, the music gives it up; or, rather, both sides give it up. The librettist writes words that the composer cannot use, and the composer allows the solution of continuity and the ugly change of method which are involved by the employment of pure speech, and which makes all descendants of the masque and the *Singspiel*—even *Fidelio* itself—something less than perfect works of art.

So far, the tale has been mainly one of wedded disagreement. Now music so lords it over drama that any stuff will do for a libretto, so long as it gives links to musical numbers; now the drama is lord and the music a mere trapping of state. With Rossini the libretto becomes of more importance, inasmuch as Rossini makes it a more integral part of the opera. But the librettists had had little chance of practising their art worthily; and we know how he found Jouy's book for *William Tell* so unsingable that he had to call in Armand Marrast to improve it. It is, however, the wording, not the structure, of *William Tell* which is the weaker; and on the whole it might be admitted that, considering what it was that Rossini set out to do, some of his librettists wrote books which, with his accompanied recitative to help, form a union, humble perhaps, but pretty complete, between the two arts. With Verdi and his librettists there is a marked improvement. Piave, Maffei and especially Boito served him well. The books of *Aida*, of *Falstaff* and of *Otello* are among the best that have been written. But it was from Wagner that opera libretto first received full and due consideration; and Wagner, as everyone knows, approached opera from the dramatic side. At two points in his achievement he reached the all but perfect union—in *Tristan und Isolde* and in *Die Meistersinger*. It seemed everything to have found, as it were, the Champion of opera, the man who was both poet enough and

musician enough to make his own words and his own music. Doubtless, the musician in Wagner bore it off in the end against the poet. The book of *Die Meistersinger* is good reading; that of *Tristan* is not. But, once more, that is not the point. Wagner did once or twice succeed in the extraordinarily difficult task of writing dramatic poems which could be so blended with music that the result is a single work of art, an opera. Separate the music from the words, and both suffer. No one would dispute that in the case of *Die Meistersinger*. *Tristan* has been called (as Mr. Heseltine reminded us in last July's number of this review) "a symphonic-poem to which words have been added by hook or by crook." But, if we could, by some hypnotic measure, have the words and the story of the opera clean removed from our memories and then hear the music alone, should we find that the music, however nearly self-sufficient it might be, had all the content which it has when given as part of a larger whole? If not, then it is operatic music. If we can imagine those cries at the meeting in the third act without the names sung to them, or even the pipe-music without the dialogue between Tristan and Kurwenal, we should be the poorer by the loss of the particularity, and with it the poignancy, of the human emotion. Not even *Tristan* is perfect. In King Mark's speech, for instance, the orchestra is called upon to cover a rift in the unity of dramatic poem and music. And possibly in Isolde's story of her wrongs the music is adventitious. And, as time went on, Wagner himself realised the difficulty of preserving that unity. He put the words farther into the background, and attempted to do more and more with the orchestra. The reason, no doubt, was partly that, as his thought developed, the meaning of his librettos became such as words cannot express. Instead of emotions he came to deal with remote and difficult spiritual truths. There lies at once the weakness as opera and the strength as music of *Parsifal*. Men do not say, much less sing, these things. They strive after them in silent thought; with great difficulty they can write down some scraps of them. Music alone can express them freely; and music which does so stands in no need of words and of visible action.

By a swing-back from Wagner, we have come, in recent years, to a new assertion of the words over the music. Take *Pelléas et Mélisande*, where the music all but abrogates its own province in opera and does little more than slightly increase the ups and downs, so to speak, of the temperature chart of the words. The poem can do alone pretty nearly all that the music and the poem together do. *Pelléas et Mélisande* is a lovely poem, full of significance: *La Bohème* and *Butterfly* are not lovely poems, full of significance; but Puccini's relation to his drama is much the same as Debussy's. In both cases we have plays set to continuous music, not indissoluble opera.

The struggle has been so long and severe, and the difficulties have been found, in practice, so mountainous, that many theorists declare the perfect union to be impossible. Yet people go on eagerly writing operas; and (though this seems a strange assertion to make in a year when London has no opera outside the "Old Vic.") opera is, even in England, passionately enjoyed by many. Opera may, in theory, be an impossible convention, in practice a form of exasperating difficulty; but the makers and the recipients of opera are far from confessing themselves beaten; and it may be permissible, without a word of dictation to the composers, to examine the question from the point of view of the librettist.

Mr. Heseltine has told us, in the article referred to above: "An opera should be a compound work of art, not a pleonasm in two separate media. . . . Opera is not merely a play with music superimposed. . . . That which the drama can adequately express of itself requires no musical embellishment . . . and that which belongs to the sphere of music requires no mimetic commentary." The attempts made by musicians to compose opera music that should be complete without the drama lie outside the scope of this article. From the side of the book, it is clear that nearly all librettists have fallen into one of two mistakes. They have either truckled to the music and composed their books merely with the object of giving the music all possible chances of showing off; or they have tried to write plays which, good or bad, should be complete without music. The first mistake prevailed chiefly in the days when music was undisputed master; the second is still being committed. To read, for instance, the book of *L'Attaque du Moulin* is to read a play which (without reference to its merits as a play) has no need for music. The author has struggled to get everything into the words. To read the book of *Manon* is to read a complete play which has been—deliberately, one would think—robbed (like *Faust* for Gounod) of all the significance in the original story which music could have expressed where the words failed. The trivial lyricism of the one, owing nothing to the imagination, leaves nothing to the imagination; the other is almost wholly unlyrical.

For, opera being a convention, the problem is complicated by the fact that its dramatic element partakes of both drama and lyric. Herein lies the advantage of oratorio and cantata over opera. They are not, in form, dramatic (although they may gain by being dramatic in quality, as is *Judith*, or *Elijah*, which, indeed, is so dramatic that it has been played upon the stage). The author of the book of an oratorio starts with an already well-known story told in well-known words; and the form of his work relieves him of any care to concern himself with

continuity of action, so long as he secures continuity of idea, so that he never need be troubled with untractable material which declines to wed with music. The chief difficulty of the opera librettist is one of adjustment. He is not writing a self-sufficient work. He is writing something that must demand music and be incomplete without music—not necessarily in the obvious sense in which music is demanded by the libretto (admirable in its way) of *Carmen*, because the songs and dances in the plot cannot be performed without music, or by that of *The Nightingale*, of which the plot depends upon musical sound. Yet his book must not be nonsense, or the music will have to obliterate, not wed it. It must be dramatic, or the composer will be driven to create the drama by means of his orchestra. It must have completeness of structure, that the musician, telling the same story in his own language, may not find himself left in the lurch. The book of *Feuersnot*, for instance, has this point of clumsiness—that it leaves the musician to fill up a space of time during which action is taking place behind the scenes which could not be represented on the stage. Finally, this dramatic work must be as lyrical and as singable as ever it can be consistently with dramatic structure and movement.

From these general requirements a few particular requirements may be deduced. The story must be simple and simply told. From a collection of librettos of modern operas it is easy to pick three or four (it is better not to mention names), of which the stories are difficult to follow even in the reading, not because they are in themselves complicated, but because, doubtless with some view to a "literary" effect, they are told in a confused and evasive manner. Directness of action and clarity of exposition are all-important. The vice of tangled intrigue belongs mainly to the period affected by the Italian comedy; but it is not yet dead. It must never be forgotten, first that the audience has to listen to the words and the music at the same time, and that it is impossible under these conditions to take in a complicated plot; and next that music is not good at explanations of detail and has other kinds of explanation to make which will fully occupy its powers. It is no bad thing that the plot of an opera libretto should lean towards the plot of a ballet and be such that the main action may be at least roughly guessed through the eye—as in Franc-Nohain's little *L'Heure Espagnole*, where the mere story could be understood by a deaf spectator. The librettist is always at an advantage when he can save himself trouble by taking a story already well known. There have been plenty of *Orféés* and *Orfeos*—each more or less representative of its period's demands and deserts; and there is no reason why there should not be many more. Lemaire's *Samson et Dalila* is in many ways an excellent libretto; and, now that the censorship has permitted

its performance, opera-makers might well turn their attention to the other great stories in the Bible. After simplicity of plot and structure comes simplicity of character and of emotion. Once more, the librettist's task is not to write a play that is to be judged by itself. If it turns out to be a good work of literature as well as a good libretto, that is merely added unto it (as suitability for separate performance may be a grace added unto the music of an opera). But, while his book must follow the recognised laws of dramatic form, his business is to provide one half of a whole. The dramatic action will not have time or scope to explain refinements and subtleties of feeling and of character, and music is not good at such work. Two things (among others) music can do as no other art can. It can take a simple emotion and so intensify and exalt it that it makes the finest achievements of this kind in pure drama look paltry beside it; and, thanks to its unique mastery in contrast, it can, by *leit-motiv*, by duet or trio or other musical device unknown to pure drama, hold so many different emotions before us at one instant, and so clearly record and restate the changes in emotion, that the whole emotional implication of the story, past and present, can be focused on any point of the action, or a capital emotional moment can be prolonged (as in life such moments are in experience, though not in time) until it has been savoured to the last drop. On simplicity of emotion follows the need for reticence in diction. There was a great deal to be said for the good lyrics among such as Metastasio and others who wrote for the composers of *arias*. They did not cumber the composer with a quantity of words, trying to express in dramatist's language what can be better expressed in musician's language. They were content to indicate the feeling, and leave the composer to develop it into full expression. The problem before modern librettists is different in form, but in essence the same. It is to say enough and not too much; to say it well yet not so "tightly" that the musician is tied down to a formula. The task is further complicated by the demands of the lyrical element in this composite art. The story must move easily, on a strong and simple foundation of plot, from emotion to emotion, by means of words that are singable: flowing, tractable words, that are at once dramatic and lyric.

Other needs there are which can only be determined between librettist and composer, as each case arises. One of these is the strange quality known as atmosphere, at creating which music is unrivalled; it is the intellectual or sensuous category, the flavour, as it were, of the opera as a whole; and, until the collaborators have settled what it is to be, it is useless for either to begin work. Atmosphere is mainly, though not wholly, dependent upon subject. And about subject there are no laws,

except that the subject must be amenable to treatment on the lines above indicated. There is the simplicity of *Tristan* and the simplicity of *Hänsel und Gretel*; the librettos of both fulfil the conditions of opera-making. But it is safe to prescribe that the subject of opera must have a strong human interest. It is the warmth and particularity of the human interest for which music is hungering when she comes in search of opera libretto. Her own mystical, spiritual work she can do better without the aid of words; but sometimes she is "hot for certainties." Many lovers of music think that it would be only fair of the librettist (and his only chance of doing worthy work himself) to provide music with stories which give good scope for the exercise of her mystical powers—that open the door into the mysteries of the human soul. But music can always be trusted to light the temporal with the eternal. Give her "two planks and a passion"—even a comic passion, and she will find her way through them to beauty which is inherent in them, yet is beyond analysis by sense or intellect.

HAROLD CHILD.

FREE THOUGHT AND THE MUSICIAN

Music and religion have often enough been correlated: but as a general rule it would seem that the correlation has been somewhat limited either historically or psychologically. Music has been styled the handmaid of religion, and, in a sense, truly; the Christian Church gave birth to practically all the great music of the early dawn, and to much of the greatest in the centuries that have followed. But it is too late now to say that "The Church will always be the chief home and school of music for the people," in the words of the distinguished men who recently appealed* for funds for the foundation of a professorship of ecclesiastical music. The correlation has not remained as simple as it was; there have been new influences at work, quite apart from those arising from song or drama or purely instrumental composition. And again, the emotional point of view that has been mainly predominant in these attempts at correlation is not lightly and unadvisedly to be taken for granted as the only possible one: seen from another psychological angle, the problems present different aspects, which have their definitely practical as well as theoretical significance. No one will deny that the last generation has seen profoundly important changes in religious thought; whatever the eddies and backwaters, the main stream has run, and still runs, like a cataract. These changes may be very differently regarded by different types of men, all of them equally firm believers in the supremacy of spiritual ideals; some may definitely regret, some may, with the help of such conceptions as that of progressive revelation, steer a middle course, some (among whom I would number myself) may definitely welcome. But in whatever light we may regard these radical refusals of the old allegiances, we shall naturally expect to find their influence in music, which has had in many ways so intimate a connection with religion.†

In our own country, which has had, not altogether fairly but indubitably, a reputation for national hypocrisy to sustain, religion has affected musical institutions in some specially distinctive ways, positive

* *The Times*, April 17, 1919.

† On the Aristotelian principle that when a thing has been said once it is hard to say it again differently, I venture to quote the last three sentences from a lecture of my own included in a composite volume, "Recent Developments in European Thought," issued by the Oxford University Press.

and negative; and changes now taken for granted have been the cause, within very recent memory, of agitation little known elsewhere. Our Sunday secular concerts, now everywhere, are little over thirty years old: *Samson et Dalila*, now one of the most familiar operas, was, only a few years ago, forcibly styled an oratorio and excluded from Covent Garden, which, again, opened its doors to *Salome* only after violent opposition now forgotten. Again, those of us whose memories are of older standing will recall the wide vogue of the popular religious song, often straying from its native haunts into the middle of programmes otherwise artistic in aim: its successors may perhaps be no better either musically or verbally, but they are at any rate different, and secular. All these happenings have been in essence deeply symptomatic of a change in biblical conceptions, conceptions more paramount here than in countries which, for better or possibly for worse, have lacked Puritan traditions: but development may be preferably traced on wider lines, in the modifications of forms of composition of universal range.

Take the oratorio, in the shape in which it was fixed for the world by Handel: a compromise between the Church and the theatre, depending for its vitality on its connection with matters accepted unquestioningly as literally true and full of powerful non-artistic associations, always edifying, but at the same time free from any pressingly personal appeal to spiritual emotions. In this routine shape, which has been the main line of oratorio-development, it is plain enough that now hardly any composer worth the name is so poor as to do it reverence. It has gone, side by side with the dominating religious routine that gave it birth.

Brahms' *Requiem* was, something like half a century ago, the beginning of the end. The composer not only commandeered a purely ecclesiastical designation for his own purposes, but, which was still more important, he himself selected words—on a scale so large as definitely to claim to envisage the whole of the matter in hand—which were purely personal in outlook and divorced from any specifically Christian elements, which, in spite of pressure, he steadfastly refused to add. The work was a definite herald of revolt inasmuch as, while employing the medium of biblical language, it discarded all mechanism whether biblical or ecclesiastical and appealed straight from personal vision to personal intelligence. We may say perhaps that Brahms was (like many another breaker of fresh ground) in one or two respects not altogether logically consistent; but somewhat alien as is the note struck by the "letzte Posaune," it is a passing-note sufficiently allegorisable. And, anyhow, the main point is clear enough: it is on the expression of individually realised mysticism that the *Requiem* depends for its spiritual validity, not on association with temporal and spatial happenings provable or disprovable. And the influence has spread steadily

wider and wider : in Brahms' own *Schicksalslied* and *Gesang der Parzen*, and in hosts of works by composers many of whom have otherwise had but little hold on him, united by the single but all-important tie that they are settings of great thoughts on the ultimate things envisaged from every conceivable angle except that of rigid orthodoxy. Composers may, according to their differing temperaments, swing towards either the right or the left wing of religious thought in their search : they may join forces with poets thousands of miles and of years apart : or they may in the last resort, like Parry, beat out both the words and the music of their own individual outlook on life. But individual it all is : and that is exactly what the routine oratorio was not.

And the genuine conservatives have felt the time-spirit also. Like the radicals, they have broken away from what was virtually indifferentism : they have realised that, whatever the medium of their own works, they must in spirit attach themselves firmly to the great line of religious music definitely designed for a place in religious ritual, not a compromise like the routine oratorio, but an unmistakable challenge to the individual soul. Sincerity, that is the one thing needful. Some of the words may be loosely called oratorios as before : but no libretti could well be farther apart in spirit than those of Elgar's *The Apostles* or *The Kingdom*, and those of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* or *St. Paul*, perhaps the most skilful of the older type. The conservatives have been forced to feel that the day of the old complacency is over, that they must justify their claims : they must take their religious music in deadly earnest if it is to live. It is, in the main, to Catholicism in one or another form—perhaps because it realises with special vividness the urgency of the struggle—that religious music of the conservative type owes its present vitality : Westminster Cathedral, the *Schola Cantorum*, such Anglican hymn-books as *Songs of Syon*—these are the rallying-points. Some musicians may feel that, whatever our just admiration for the great plainsong melodies and Palestrina and the rest of the geniuses of the sixteenth century, it is after all in the twentieth that we are living, through no fault or virtue of our own, but as a plain matter of fact : but all must needs be deeply grateful for the ideals of purity and dignity which these conservative reformers, even if perhaps regarding music as something like a mere department of theology, have always steadily upheld.

Nevertheless, the direction of the main current is plain. It is only when a composer has personal sympathies that he is impelled to write religious music of the spiritually conservative outlook : he no longer writes it, so to speak, officially. Which is in itself a very great change, and implies much more still. It is the music that stays in the old religious paths that we now ask for a reason for the hope that is in it :

not, as fifty years ago, the music that breaks away. And we do this automatically: as it were in our sleep, we have swung round so that what was once natural seems now to us unnatural, and *vice versa*. All the great religious music holds its place in virtue of its universally spiritual and artistic force, not by any vitality of its orthodox associations: instinctively we judge it apart from its theology. We may feel indeed that there is a powerful, perhaps a perennial, artistic expressionableness in the varyingly interpreted and emphasised forms of sincerely held supernaturalism, whether seen through the eyes of a child (as in Haydn's *Creation*) or through those of a grown man: but, in so feeling, we universalise in terms of poetry and art and the human spirit, we reject the old paths, which were nothing if not definite and exclusive. We may hear various reasons given why performances of oratorios are less to the forefront, why composers never write them or fail to bring to light sequels, planned years ago, to works once popular, reasons of length, heaviness, or any other quality supposed to be alien to the taste of to-day: but far above all such subordinate causes must, I am sure, be placed the one all-sufficient cause that to more and more of us, whether or not the fact may be present to consciousness, they deal with things that are dead.

And there are also the practical issues for the individual musician. Of course, the work of some musicians has no sort of bearing, direct or indirect, on religious matters; their personal religious opinions may be what they will, and their musical activities will remain entirely unaffected. But with others it is not so; religion, in some shape, enters into their professional lives. Those who belong to the right wing, whether moderates or extremists, have many refuges to their religious (if not, perhaps, always their artistic) hearts' desires; and the indifferentists can always herd and fend for themselves. It is to the musicians of the left wing that the problem comes.

It may be said indeed that there should really be no problem; or, further, that the right wing has now grown so liberally comprehensive that there should really be no left wing at all. Compromise, it may be urged, is the salt of life; and nowadays nothing more than conformity need be asked of anyone. An adequately robust is better than a valetudinarian conscience, and there are excellent reasons why foundations should not be too curiously explored. Life and art are both far wider than religious formulæ: let the musician think about his honest livelihood and his artistic ideals, which he will certainly have as many opportunities of upholding in the church as in the world. All forms of words in these matters, indeed, are by common consent mere approximations: why not, in all good faith, do at Rome as the Romans do? Many things that may look like practical problems belong, we

are told, to the sphere of the unrealised and the inoperative, surviving only by inertia : it is foolish to worry about them. And, after all, even the unrealised and inoperative utterance of words concerns only the members of a choir : the organist may have nothing even indirectly to do with confessions and creeds, he need not open his mouth unless he likes, need not do a single non-musical thing.

It is all familiar enough, indeed sound enough in its measure, but still . . . Consider the other side. An organist or a choir-member of church or chapel holds his post and performs his duties in the service of a particular religious community, the whole distinctive being of which depends upon its corporate acceptance of particular supernaturalist beliefs expressed in prayers and psalms and hymns and anthems and indeed in everything that its musical servants do, except the organist's "voluntaries" before and after the ritual. These communities are not vaguely comprehensive collections of men of goodwill : so long at least as words are considered to bear any particular meaning, their terms of membership are plain spoken enough. And the situation being so, the authorities of the community might reasonably require always instead of only sometimes that these officials, being responsible for important elements in the community's ritual, should be definite, acting, members of it in as full a signification as any others of its officials. Which indeed seems only common sense, but carries with it as its inevitable corollary this : that no one should start to learn the organ with a view to a professional career unless he is prepared either to confine himself to work independent of the service of any religious community or to take the risk that, at any time, his convictions and a considerable portion of his livelihood may have to part company. The authorities may justly enough hold, if it comes to the point, that for their purposes an inferior artist who believes in the creed that he is doing his share to inculcate is preferable to a superior artist who does not : they cannot be expected to think only of non-religious interests, nor indeed should the organist desire to be treated as a soulless mechanism like his organ. And it is fair enough that the ties should hold outside the official ritual : unless they can be envisaged purely æsthetically, as is rarely the case, carol-services and Christmas concerts in general are unshakably bound up with the acceptance of the verbal inspiration of a few verses in the first and third Gospels. And apart from music altogether, an organist and his choir may well react religiously on each other in many ways. If the churches and chapels demand of their musical servants more than the mere music, it is not for any musician who takes either his art or himself seriously to complain.

But the musician who is not directly or indirectly attached to the

service of any religious community has every right to complain if he is casually treated as if he were. The matter need not perhaps affect him individually: when, in 1916 and again in 1919 (on the latter occasion the project was dropped), the Union of Graduates in Music officially proposed that, as a corporate body, it should attend an ecclesiastical service and transact its public business under the ecclesiastical wing, formal protests were very rightly made on behalf of those who, though of course there was no compulsion on their personal presence, resented this assumption of an illegitimate status for the society as a whole. But the musician may often enough be individually affected: he may, for example, if a teacher of class-singing, be forced into a tacit agreement with the Cowper-Temple clause at the least by being required to supervise the preparation of hymns. Similar infractions of conscience-rights are continually being imposed on the ground that they are mere matters of discipline without further implication, that they are, to borrow the phraseology of "World Conferences," matters not of Faith but of Order. But after all said and done, the injunction about rendering to Cæsar and the rest of it retains its force, whatever the words in which we may choose to clothe its spirit. And it is for those, in the musical as in any other sphere, who take religion seriously from whatever may be their personal angle to join hands in demanding that some of the most important of all things shall not be lightly and indifferently taken for granted.

But, anyhow, those of the left wing on whom the problem does not press must not throw charges of insincerity at their fellow-musicians on whom it does: it is a hard word, easy to use and rarely to be justified, and the pharisaism of the radical is quite as unlovely as that of the conservative. A man's conscience is his own: and no one else has a right to say how much it ought, or ought not, to stand. Many people, keenly sensible of the importance of these matters, may feel no natural impulse to put two and two together nor to keep their intellectual and ethical activities in non-watertight compartments: many others may feel that, strongly as they may hold to their opinions and clearly realise to what they logically lead, it is rating them too highly to sacrifice for their sake other things of great, possibly greater, value. And, moreover, it is fair enough to urge that, especially in these days when we hear so much of the Psychology of the Unconscious, we must recognise that everyone has spheres of unconsciousness which seem unaccountable to those who do happen to be conscious in these particular regards, and that it is not a light moral responsibility to help to bring up into consciousness some principle that may gravely disturb the whole complex.

All this is plainly true: and yet many, increasingly many, cannot

be satisfied so. However much or however little they may personally decide that their consciences can stand, they cannot surrender their intellectual position, nor let it be carried by default. They must accept the risks, for themselves and perhaps for others. Not that the left-wing musician wants to part company with common-sense. He is, if an Englishman, thankful to belong to a society which takes sufficiently broad views of human nature to understand that religious differences need not, and should not, cut (as sometimes elsewhere) right across ordinary human intercourse; nor has he, at any rate outside the service of a religious community, any more hesitation about the public vocal utterance of religious words which he does not accept than about any other singing which may not express his personal feelings.* But, temperamentally, he cannot help taking words, formulæ, compliances, compromises, more seriously: he cannot assent with an easy mind to any religious tests, even if only implicit, that may happen to come his way. He cannot comfort himself with the idea of the unrealised and inoperative: he feels the conflict, and he also feels that a continual pressure is being silently and perhaps unconsciously, but none the less effectively, exerted against him. He cannot believe in the efficacy of saying "peace, peace," when the facts seem otherwise; nor can he envisage toleration except as a two-sided thing. Whenever the subject of religious teaching in State schools comes up for discussion, we hear of teachers who chafe at the obligation laid on them to teach, whether by commission or omission, what they do not themselves believe: and similarly, though we do not hear so much of them, there must be many organists with only a subsidiary interest in the ecclesiastical side of their work who, when accompanying the 120th Psalm to Hopkins in C or the Fourth Tone or anything else, good or bad, must sympathise with its author's lament at being constrained to dwell with Mesech and have his habitation among the tents of Kedar.† Organists are far less important to the community in general than school teachers: nevertheless, they are human beings with the same right as anyone else to the luxury of a conscience. But the musical profession is naturally less concentrated and powerful, and things work more slowly. Before very long, the problem of the freethinking State school-

* If, with Mr. Augustine Birrell in his brilliant essay on "Actors," we are inclined to question the value of a form of human activity of which the essence is to pretend, we may perhaps say that any singer, in so far as he approaches the actor, is illustrating the inferiority of vocal to instrumental music.

† If I may perhaps be allowed a moment's divergence into personal reminiscence, I may say that the organistship with which I dwelt in the past was the minimum and most tolerant of Mesechs, whose authorities (from whom my personal position was not concealed) never imposed even by implication any sort of non-musical test upon me. I am glad to have decided, some years ago, to abandon that portion of my work; but the experience has perhaps its retrospective psychological interest.

teacher may find its solution in a system of secular education under which the religious teaching of any denomination, including the denomination of undenominationalism, will be left to those who by personal conviction accept it: but it may be longer before school music-teachers are always appointed for the discharge of solely secular duties and non-ecclesiastical organ appointments cease to be the rarities they are now. Still, such ends can always be worked for, by frankness and the steady formation of public opinion. If religious duties are fittingly specialised, the whole of the rest of the field will be equally fittingly open to all musicians, independently of any religious tests whatever, explicit or implicit.

No doubt, there is at present something of a tangle, to the musician as to anyone else on the left wing: the one side has had so considerable a start. We all have to remember Johnson's remark to Boswell that, so long as we clear our minds of cant, we need not be over-pedantically anxious to clear our lips of convenient and now conventionally meaningless forms of speech. But the proviso is that we must (and it is not always so very easy) make perfectly sure that these forms of speech really do not now mean anything to anybody. The house of Rimmon has many open doors; but Naaman's mental attitude seems the minimum ethically demandable from any outsider who has to bow the knee in it, and certainly superior to Pascal's advice to the sceptical Chevalier de Méré to act in every way as if he believed, *cela vous abêtira*.^{*} The musician may too long, and by not a few, have been regarded as either an *ipso facto* conforming servant like Naaman, or, like Pascal's friend, a person of no specially high character; but he has surely won his claim to be judged by the same intellectual and moral standards as other reasonable folk, and to the possession of his spiritual independence.

Still, if a composer inclines, even in an only moderate measure, to the left wing, his work is often enough supposed to require explanation from the other side. Brahms, we know, did his best to make clear the fact—which on the face of it seems sufficiently obvious—that the *Ernste Gesänge* were designed by him as a directly anti-orthodox protest†: but not infrequently, like other things of still more definite tendency, they are commandeered by those who feel it their duty to try to rope all men of genius into the Christian fold, somehow or other, *nolentes volentes*. While, on the other hand, if the left-wing composer

^{*} See the more recent editions of the "Pensées."

† Miss May, in her "Life" (ii., 274), explains how they had their origin in the composer's dislike of current evangelicalism; and Kalbeck (in his edition of the *Herszenberg* letters), referring to their "not only antidogmatic but in places altogether unbelieving" words, mentions that Brahms habitually spoke of them in terms which emphasised their freethinking standpoint.

has been inspired by poetry orthodox in speech but universal in spirit, he is liable to be interpreted, on the spot, with the most rigid literalness. But the comprehensiveness is rarely mutual. If a composer were to set, without important omissions, Swinburne's *Hymn of Man*, for example—a poem certainly universal in spirit, however unorthodox in speech—it seems rather doubtful whether the work would have a quite fair chance on its musical merits.

And, whether he wishes to take any sort of overt action or not, the left-wing musician must unflinchingly refuse to be argued by M. Vincent d'Indy* or anyone else out of his conviction that he is quite as capable as any believer of appreciating to the fullest extent all the great religious music ever written. The great work of all the creators in the whole wide field of spirit has its roots, far deeper than any spatial or temporal happenings, down in the mysticism, or whatever we like to call it, by which we chiefly live. What does it matter if we visualise the *Sanctus* of the B minor Mass with quite other eyes than Bach's? The forms change and pass : it is (to quote a phrase from Lord Morley's great book on *Compromise*) the feeling for the incommensurable things that remains. And in that feeling the freethinking musician must, as confidently as anyone else, claim his inalienable share.

ERNEST WALKER.

* See the finely phrased and transparently sincere confession of faith in his "Cours de Composition Musicale" (Introduction, Chapters I. II.), with its insistence on the necessity of a theistic belief as a minimum for the true musician.

TROUBADOUR SONGS

MUCH has been written of the troubadours since Mr. Thomas Haynes Bayly delighted our great-grandmothers with his famous ditty. We have had critical editions of their poems, and studies of the importance of these in the history of European literature, and in recent times even the musical side of their art, which was neglected alike by philologists and by writers of literary history for many years after interest in their poetry had begun to revive, has had something like justice done to it, notably by the late Pierre Aubry and by Dr. J. B. Beck. It is, to say the least, extremely doubtful whether Thomas Haynes Bayly ever read a genuine troubadour lyric; there can be scarcely any doubt that he never heard a note of genuine troubadour music. A modern Bayly would have greater facilities than the bard of the thirties possessed for giving a more or less correct picture of the troubadour as he really was. Yet even to-day there is less general knowledge and appreciation of the art of the troubadours than it deserves, by reason both of its actual merit and of the work of its authors as pioneers in the history of European literature and music.

The word troubadour means a finder or inventor, and the poets of Southern France were quite justified in applying such a name to themselves, for they really were the inventors of a new form of art, that is to say the art of expressing in rimed verse the ideals of chivalrous love, and of setting that verse to music. They were imitated by the poets of Northern France and of many other countries, but they themselves had no model from which to copy their love-poems.

Two distinct branches of lyric poetry were cultivated by the Provençal troubadours and the Northern French trouvères. On the one hand we have the pure lyrics, the regular love-poetry, and on the other, certain half-lyrical, half-narrative poems, which are supposed to have been derived from popular songs. The love-poetry was the outcome and the expression of the spirit of chivalry, which played such a prominent part in the social life of the Middle Ages, especially at the courts of the Southern French nobles. Troubadour poems of this type, of an infinite variety as regards form, were all inspired by the same general idea—that is the idea of love as it was conceived in the brilliant and highly cultivated aristocratic society of Southern France. Love was looked upon as a cult, founded, like Christian love, on the infinite disproportion between the lover's desire and his merit, as a school of

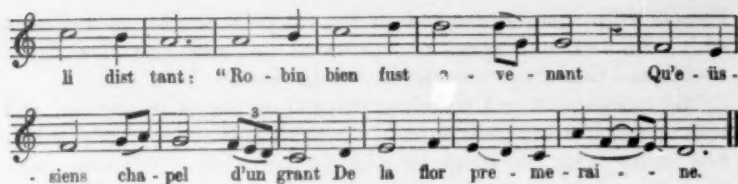
honour which necessarily ennobles the lover, and as a willing bondage in which the lover rejoices even while he suffers. This conception of love dominated the love-poetry of the Middle Ages and found its highest expression in the lyrics of the *Vita Nuova*. The great merit of the troubadours is that they were the earliest writers to express these ideas in verse.

The other branch of their poetry was divided into various kinds, the most important being the *balada* (dancing-song) and the *pastorela*. There seems little reason to doubt that the *balada* was derived from the traditional folk-songs sung by the country-people on the first of May to accompany a dance in honour of the return of spring. The *pastorela* describes the meeting of the poet with a shepherdess, and their conversation. This type of song became very popular with the Northern French trouvères. Nearly a hundred French pastourelles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are still extant. Many of the existing songs of these kinds, both Provençal and French, are the work of well-known troubadours and trouvères. Others are anonymous, but all are the work of conscious artists. No genuine folk-songs of the period have come down to us. Here is a French pastourelle by Jehan Bodel, a trouvère of Arras, who died in 1210.

JEHAN BODEL. PASTOURELLE.

M.S. Paris, Bibl. Nat.
fonds français 12615, fol. 78a.

En - tre le . . bos et le plai - ne Tro - vai de vil -
 - le lon - tai - gne To - se de grant biau - té plai - ne,
 Ses bes - tes gar - dant; Cler chap - toit co - me . . se -
 - rai - ne, et Ro - bina a vois au - tai - ne li res -
 - pont en fla - hau - tant, Et je por o - ir lor sem -
 - blant, Des - cen - di, ai en - ten - di Que ce - le



[Translation. Between the wood and the plain, I found a maiden, full of great beauty, from a distant town, watching her flock. She was singing sweetly as a siren, and Robin, in a high voice, answers her, playing his flute; and I, in order to hear who they were, dismounted, and heard her say this to him: "Robin, it would be very pleasing had we a wreath of many spring flowers."]

The earliest troubadour songs date from about the end of the eleventh century, and the latest from the end of the thirteenth. The French *trouvères* began to write about fifty years later than their Provençal brethren, and their art too died out towards the end of the thirteenth century, decaying with the decay of chivalry.

An immense amount of verse and music was written by the troubadours during these two hundred years. In the words of Raimon Vidal, who wrote a treatise on composition early in the thirteenth century: "All people, Christians, Jews and Saracens, emperors, kings, princes, dukes, counts, viscounts, countors, vavasours, knights, clerics, burgesses, peasants, small and great, put their minds all the time to composing (*trobar*) and to singing"

Everyone who wrote love-poetry and set it to music was a troubadour, whether he were a king or a tradesman, a duke or a professional musician. Music and verse are all of the same type, though not of the same artistic quality; the best troubadours were drawn from various ranks of life, and in most cases it would be impossible to guess the social standing of a poet from his works. No fewer than four hundred and sixty troubadours are known to us by name, and poems by nearly all of them are extant. Unluckily their music has not been preserved in anything approaching the same quantity as their poetry. The words of over two thousand five hundred troubadour songs have come down to us; the melodies of only two hundred and fifty-nine. The extant MS. collections were compiled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Many of the MSS. were designed to contain only the words of the songs. Others, which contain music as well, are incomplete. Staves have been ruled for the melodies, but in many cases the notes have not been filled in. In this respect, the Northern French *trouvères* are more fortunate than their Provençal contemporaries. In the

French MSS. it is the rule and not the exception to give the melodies with the songs, and nearly two thousand tunes by trouvères of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have been preserved.

The troubadours and trouvères wrote their poems in stanzas, and each stanza of a song was sung to the same melody, so it is usual to find, in the MSS., the music given at the beginning of each song, with the words of the first stanza written underneath the notes (or rather under the staves, for the melody was generally copied after the words). The remaining stanzas of the song follow, without music. The staves, ruled in red ink, are generally of four lines, the clef letters F and C are used, and the notation in most MSS. resembles that which is still used for plain-song. Thus the pitch of the notes is shown quite clearly, but in most cases there is no indication as to their relative time-value. It is unlikely that the songs were sung in the free unmeasured rhythm of plain-song, but the question of how they should be interpreted as regards their rhythm has never been completely settled. An account of the various theories that have been propounded on this subject, and a discussion as to their relative merits, would be out of place in the present article. It is enough to say that the melodies here reproduced have been transcribed according to the system of rhythmic modes in use among the polyphonic composers of the time. Some thirteen years ago, Pierre Aubry and Dr. Beck, working independently of each other, both arrived at the conclusion that the melodies should be so interpreted, and their theory certainly seems more satisfactory than any others that have been advanced.

The songs of the troubadours are pure melodies. It is probable that they were usually sung to the accompaniment of a bowed instrument, the ancestor of the violin, called *viula* in Provençal and *viele** in old French, but the MSS. give nothing but the voice part, as we might say, of the song, and it is impossible to tell in what the accompaniment consisted. Only one among the many musical theorists of the thirteenth century, Johannes de Grocheo, tells us anything about the songs of the trouvères and troubadours, and he says nothing about the accompaniment. It is quite possible that the songs were often sung without any accompaniment at all.

The important point is the close connection which exists between the melodies and the words. The troubadour was both poet and composer, and we cannot properly understand his art unless we study words and melodies together. References to their songs made by the troubadours themselves and by their biographers† nearly always include mention of

* This instrument was of course quite different from the modern *vielle* (hurdy-gurdy).

† Short accounts of the lives of the troubadours are given in some of the MSS.

both elements. To take one troubadour as an instance: the "Life" of Peire Vidal begins thus: "Peire Vidal was of Toulouse, the son of a furrier. And he sang better than any man in the world, and it was he who made the richest melodies." The troubadour himself begins one of his songs with the assertion: "I know how to join and unite words and melody so well that no man can equal me (lit. : come up to my heel) in precious and rich song-making." And again, when he had given up composing for a time, for grief at the death of his patron, Count Raimon V. of Toulouse, and was asked by some Aragonese friends to make a song, he says: "I will quickly make a song that Guilhem and Sir Blascol Romeu may take to Aragon with them, if the melody seems to them good and simple." And in a third song he speaks of reciting "my new song with a new melody."

Unfortunately, as has been said already, so little of the music has come down to us that in the majority of cases we cannot properly estimate the value of a troubadour's work. For instance, we have eighty poems by Guiraut de Bornelh, reputed in his own day to be the greatest of the troubadours ("He was a better troubadour than any of those who had been before him, or who came after him," says his biographer, "wherefore he was called Master of the Troubadours"), but only four of his melodies have survived. To judge, however, from the songs which have come down to us in their complete state, it seems clear that musical and poetical talent usually went together—the best poets were also the best musicians.

There are many good poets among the troubadours, but there is only one who may with justice be called great. This is Bernart of Ventadorn, one of the earlier troubadours, who was born during the third decade of the twelfth century. "He was a man of poor birth," says his biographer, "son of a servant who was an oven-tender, who heated the oven to cook the bread of the castle of Ventadorn." It so happened that the Viscount Ebles II. of Ventadorn was himself a troubadour, and he seems to have discovered Bernart's talent and to have taught him the art of song-making. The oven-tender's son developed into one of the finest lyric poets of the Middle Ages. Forty-five of his poems are extant and nineteen of his melodies—enough to let us judge of his talent not only as a poet but as a troubadour in the full sense of the word. Words and melodies of these songs are beautiful, but more than that, the character of the melody is in some cases wonderfully expressive of the sense of the words. The best known and perhaps the most beautiful of his songs may be given here as an example of his genius.

BERNART OF VENTADORN.
 "Quan vei la lauzeta mover."

* M.S. Paris, Bibl. Nat.
 fr. 22543, fol. 56v.

Quan vei la lau - ze - ta mo - ver De joi sas a - las
 con - tra'l rai, Que s'o - bli . da, . . lais - sa's ca -
 - zer, . . Per la dos - sor . . qu'al cor li vai, . .
 Ai - las, tal en - ve - ya m'en . . ve De qui qu'eu
 ve - ya jau - zi - - on, Me - ra - vi - lhas . . ai
 quar des - se . . lo cor de de - zi - rier no'm fon. . .

[Translation. When I see the lark soaring towards the sun for very joy, so that it forgets itself and lets itself sink for the sweetness that fills its heart, alas, such envy comes to me of whomsoever I see rejoicing, I marvel that my heart does not break at once with longing.]

The whole song, which has seven stanzas and a *tornada* (envoy), is a lament on his lady's cruelty, and it would be hard to imagine a melody more appropriate to the melancholy character of the words.

When Bernart was in a cheerful mood, he could set his song to a cheerful tune.

* This melody has also been preserved in three other MSS.; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale fonds français 844, fol. 190b, f. fr. 20050, fol. 47v, and Milan, Ambrosiana R71 superiore, fol. 10r.

BERNAUT OF VENTADORN.
 "Ab joi muou lo vers e'l comens."

* M.S. Paris, Bibl. Nat.
 fr. 22543, fol. 57r.

Ab joi muou lo vers e'l co - mens Et ab joi
 re - man e fe - nis, Et sol que bo - na . . fos la . .
 fis Bos sai qu'er lo co - men - sa - mens. Per la
 bo - na co - men - san - sa mi don joi e a - le -
 gran - sa, Per so deu hom la bo - na fin . . gra -
 zir . . Car totz bos faitz aug lau - zar al . . fe - nir.

[Translation. With joy I start and begin the song, and with joy I end and finish it, and if the end be good I know the beginning will be good too. For the good beginning I give myself joy and delight, wherefore one ought to thank the good end, for I hear all good deeds praised on their completion.]

Although love was the principal theme of most of the troubadours, some of them wrote on other subjects as well. The *sirventes*,† a political or moral satire, was cultivated by many poets. It was a rule that every love-song must have a melody specially composed for it. The *sirventes*, on the other hand, was always written to the melody, and in the metrical form, of some well-known song, in order, no doubt, that it might become known quickly. Thus the task of the satirist was not to compose for himself a tune that suited his words, but to choose from the work of a brother troubadour the melody most appropriate to his subject.

Bertran de Born, the sower of discord between King Henry II. of England and his sons, is the best of the Provençal satirical poets. One

* Also preserved in Bibl. Nat. fr. 844, fol. 202r, and Milan Ambrosiana R71 sup., fol. 9v.

† The *sirventes* was so called either because it was written in the service of the troubadour's lord, or because it was the "servant" of another song, i.e., written in its metre and to its melody.

of the biographers of this troubadour tells us that "the King of Aragon called the songs of Guiraut de Bornelh the wives of Bertran de Born's sirventes"—meaning no doubt that many of Bertran's sirventes were written to the melodies of Guiraut's love-songs and in their metre. Only two of the existing sirventes are written on the model of existing songs by Guiraut, but by good luck these songs are among the very few, the melodies of which have come down to us, so that we have some opportunity of judging Bertran's aptitude for choosing appropriate melodies for his satires and war songs. In one case at any rate he was happy in his choice of a song that has an effective metrical form and a lilting melody, to which his own words—a panegyric of war—adapt themselves admirably. Here is the song in question, given with Guiraut's words to which it was composed, and with Bertran's which were adapted to it.*

GUIRAUT DE BORNELH.
"Non puec sofrir qu'a la dolor."

M.S. Paris, Bibl. Nat.
fr. 23543, fol. 82r.

Guiraut. Non puec so - frir qu'a la do - lor De ma den
Bertran. Be'm platz lo - gais tems de Pas - cor Que fai fo -

la len - gua no vir, El cor a la no - ve - la
lhas e flors ve - nir, E platz mi quant aug la bau -

flor, Lan - quan vey los . . ra - mels flo - rir, E'la chans fors
dor Dels au - zels que . . fan re - ten - tir Lor chan per

pel bos - cat - ge; Dels au - ze - letz e - na - mo -
lo bos - cat - ge; E platz mi quan vei per los

- ratz, E si - tot m'es tau a - pes - satz Ni pres per
platz Ten - das e pa - ba - lhos fer - matz, E ai grant

mal - au - rat - ge, Quan vei cams ni ver - giers ni
a - le - grat - ge, Quan vei per cam - pa - nha re -

platz Eu'm re - no - vel e m'a - so - latz.
- nhatz Ca - va - liers e ca - vaus ar - - matz.

* A note is missing here.

* The same song was used as a model for a sirventes, "Ar mi posc eu lauzar d'amor," by another troubadour, Peire Cardenal.

[Translations. *Guiraut*. I cannot help turning my tongue to the aching of my tooth and my heart to the spring flowers, when I see the twigs blossoming and the little birds are singing for love of each other in the coppice, and though I may be troubled and seized by misfortune, when I hear songs and see gardens and meadows, I live again and grow joyful.

Bertran. The joyous Eastertide pleases me well, which makes the leaves and flowers to come, and it pleases me when I hear the rejoicing of the birds who make their song resound through the coppice, and it pleases me when I see, throughout the fields, tents and pavilions set up, and I have great rejoicing when I see, ranked through the countryside, armed knights and horses.]*

So much for the relationship between the words and the music of the troubadour song. There are three points to be considered when we examine the music in itself—tonality, rhythm and form.

Concerning the tonality of the songs it is not possible to speak very definitely. The eight modes of plain-song were the idiom in which art music was composed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but the troubadours and trouvères do not seem to have recognised and observed the rules that were recognised by liturgical composers. Only one of the melodies reproduced in this article has a strongly marked modal character, namely the *Pastourelle* by Jehan Bodel, which is clearly composed in the first plain-song mode. "Quan vei la lauzeta mover" by Bernart of Ventadorn may be said to be in the unacknowledged ninth mode, transposed to D, but the other song by Bernart, "Ab joi muou lo vers e'l comens," is frankly in the modern major mode. This melody is preserved in three MSS., in two of which it is given in F, while in the third (B.N. fr. 844) it is transposed to C. The tonality of "Non puese sofrir qu'a la dolor" seems to be impossible to determine.

With regard to rhythm, I am inclined to think that the troubadours may have used the rhythmic modes, as they sometimes used the plain-song modes, almost without knowing that they were doing so, and that, while the songs are intended to have a rhythmic measure, a good deal of freedom was allowed in their actual execution. The few melodies that are written in proportional notation, showing the relative time-values of the notes, are undoubtedly in one or other of the rhythmic modes. Such a song is Bernart's "Ab joi muou lo vers," the melody of which in one MS. (that from which the version given above has been transcribed) is given in proportional notation, which shows the song to be composed in the second rhythmic mode (♩ 〰) beginning on the weak (long) beat, with the exception of the fifth and sixth lines, where

* Bertran's authorship of this poem has been contested.

the rhythm changes to first mode (♩ ♪), beginning on the strong beat, to suit the change in the verse-metre which occurs in these lines. The rhythm of the other songs must be a matter of conjecture. The first mode seems to fit the metre of the words best in each case. Although six different modes were used by the composers of polyphonic music, the troubadours seem to have written their melodies in the first three only. As the third mode (♩ ♪ ♩) is not represented in any of the songs given above, an example of it is added here. This song by Peire Vidal, besides illustrating the use of the third rhythmic mode, is a good example of a melody that suits the sense of the words.

PIERRE VIDAL.
"Ges pel tems fer e brau."
M.S. Paris, Bibl. Nat.
fr. 22543, fol. 64v.

Ges pel tems fer e brau qu'a lutz tem - piers e vens, E tor -
- ba'ls . . e - le - mens E fail cel brun e blau, No's cam -
- ja . . mos ta - lens, Ans es mos . . pes - sa - mens En joi
et en can - tar, E'm vuellh mais . . a - le - grar
Quan vei la neu sus en l'au - ta mon - ta - nha . .
Que can las flors s'es - pan - don per la pla - nha.

[Translation. My mind does not change for the wild rough weather that causes storms and winds, and troubles the elements, and makes the sky now dark, now blue, but all my thought is of joy and of singing, and I want to rejoice more when I see the snow up on the high mountain than when the flowers are blossoming throughout the plain.]

Lastly as regards the form of the songs. The arrangement of melodic phrases did not correspond so closely with the metrical subdivisions of

the stanzas as one might, perhaps, expect—not, that is, in the songs of the Provençal troubadours. The great majority of *trouvère* songs are written in a more or less fixed form. The stanza falls into two parts, the first part is subdivided into two equal halves. The first of these halves is sung to a melodic phrase which is repeated for the second half. The second part of the stanza is sung to a different melodic phrase or phrases, but it seldom happens that there is any repetition of the melody in the second part. This form is found in a great number of troubadour songs, but it happens quite as often that the melody flows on without repetition from the beginning of the stanza till the end. Only one of the songs reproduced in this article has a repeated musical phrase in the first half, namely Bernart's "Ab joi muou lo vers." In his other song, although the stanza itself falls into two equal parts, and each part into two equal halves, there is no repetition of melodies. Here we have, I think, yet another instance of the artistic sense of the troubadours. There is no repetition or comparison of ideas in the words of this stanza, it is completely taken up with the description of the emotions aroused in the poet's mind by the sight of the lark. In "Ab joi muou lo vers," on the other hand, the repetition of the melody seems to suit the sense of the words. It must be admitted that we should seek in vain for such evidences of artistic feeling in all the troubadour songs that have been preserved for us. The troubadours lived in an artificial atmosphere, and their art was regulated by certain artificial rules and restrictions. Yet many of the better artists among them were not so hampered by the rules as to lose their originality, rather they made their songs the expression of their own personality and emotions, and there are not a few among these songs that are well worthy of being wakened into life again after having lain buried in the MSS. for seven centuries.

BARBARA SMYTHE.

The illustrations of this article have been taken from the actual MSS. and transcribed according to the Aubry-Beck theory. None of the melodies appear to have been published before, except "Quan vei la lauzeta mover," which is given (in a transcription based on Riemann's theory, i.e., in 4 time), in an article by Restori in the *Rivista Musicale Italiana*; and this transcription has been reproduced in *The Troubadours at Home* by J. H. Smith.—[Ed.]

MAURICE RAVEL

ART, one may observe (as so many before us have observed), is of various kinds. There have been poets classical and poets romantic, poets academic and poets revolutionary, poets personal and poets objective, poets of the real and poets of the fantastic, poets to whom truth is but an aspect of beauty and poets to whom beauty is but the revelation of truth. All such distinctions have a certain value if they are not pressed too far. They imply, generally, not that certain types of artist are composed of entirely different ingredients, but merely that the same ingredients are mixed in widely differing proportions, and that one type or the other tends to emerge according to the composition of the mixture. That any of these types is absolutely the highest is impossible to prove, for the appreciation of them varies not only with the temperament of the individual critic (from which, try as he may, he cannot altogether escape), but with the mutations of age, race and clime. To-day, for instance, we are sick to death of the blatant empiricist and the self-glorifying revolutionary; many an instinctive rebel is turning conservative in self-defence, fearing lest all may eventually be submerged in a wild chaos of disorder. Verdicts that are passed to-day, therefore, will doubtless be revised in twenty, fifty, or a hundred years' time, when the wheel has swung round once more, and the problem before the artist is not, as now, to establish conventions, but rather to break them down. It is therefore presumptuous for a critic to attempt to assign to one artist a higher or lower rank than another on the ground that the type or class which he represents is of absolutely greater or less value. He can profitably show, however, to which class (if any) he belongs, and perhaps indicate the measure of his achievement as a representative of that class, leaving further deductions to be made at will by the reader. That is not the only method of criticism, certainly, but it is a possible method, and one that seems applicable to the case of Maurice Ravel. At any rate, it is the method I am here going to follow; I shall try first of all to show the type of artist that Ravel is, and then suggest how far he has been able to clinch the virtues and overcome the limitations of his kind.

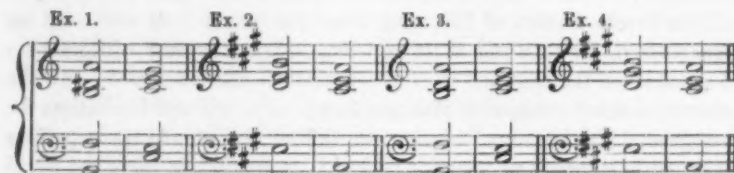
Many will feel inclined to say, at this juncture, that Ravel is not a type at all, but an individual. It is certainly true that elements usually conspicuous in very different types are present in his make-up.

Like most Frenchmen, for instance, he is first and foremost a traditionalist, recalling at times not merely the formalism of Couperin and the clavecinists, but that of the earlier Viennese school. He is also something of a dandy, liking his music to be better groomed, more smartly turned out, than the music of other men. Yet there is also in him a streak of the revolutionary, eager to *épater le bourgeois*, and occasionally betrayed by that eagerness into an extravagance of mien that is not compatible with true dandyism. The really well-dressed man is not the man who arrests one's eye and forces one to turn back and gaze upon him in the street. Again, though usually, in aim, a classic, he is also, at moments, a deliberate impressionist—and is not Impressionism but an offshoot of that Romanticism which every child of our age has sworn, body and soul, to abjure?

Yet, though he evade these dichotomies, he cannot escape altogether. One of the distinctions already drawn is that between the poets to whom truth is ultimately beauty and those to whom beauty is ultimately truth, or, to put it differently, between those for whom art is before all an interpretation of life, and those for whom it is above all an escape from life, a world of its own into which they may withdraw for a space when the heat and the dust outside become intolerable. To the second of these categories Maurice Ravel may, without hesitation, be assigned. He has no message to deliver, he sounds no imperious trumpet to summon us to action; asked if he would fain leave the world somewhat better than he found it, he would smile, one imagines, a little smile of deprecation, and change the subject. To one of his most delightful works he has prefixed as a motto the saying of Henri de Régnier: "Le plaisir délicieux et toujours nouveau d'une occupation inutile." Not for him the tumult of conflicting passions or the quest of the blue flower. Music is for him a kingdom of sound, in which elusive rhythms and subtle harmonies clash faintly for the ravishment of those whose ears are attuned to hear them. His delight is in difficult and delicate feats of technique, in small things finely done; he is a master of nuance and innuendo, who never bludgeons you into a statement when a nod or a caress is sufficient to convey his meaning.

Such a talent may easily evaporate in mere tenuity, or lose itself, like that of Debussy, in the fogs of impressionism. Ravel has been saved from this fate by an unusually keen and lucid intellect, which insists, as a rule, on symmetry of form and clear melodic outlines. Sometimes he is frankly impressionist, as in *Miroirs*, the Mallarmé songs, or the first number of the *Rhapsodie Espagnole*. But at such moments he usually sees very clearly where he is going, and his impressionism often shapes itself in curiously formal patterns—in *Jeux d'Eau*, for instance, where the swirling waters dance and eddy

in strict obedience to the laws of the sonata. It is strange that such a composer should have been charged with submitting too readily to the influence of Debussy, yet there have been, and are, people willing to bring the charge. Ravel is seldom impressionist at all, and even when he is, the actual sound of his music is quite unlike that of Debussy. He is not at all fond of the triad of whole tones and the chord of the major ninth, on which Debussy relies very largely for his harmonic effects. His preference is for the sharper dissonance of the minor second and its correlative the major seventh, and he gets his dissonance almost always, not by the empirical combination of sounds that have no real harmonic relationship, but by the simple chromatic alteration of one or more of the notes of some perfectly familiar chord, or by the substitution of an adjacent note or notes. This process is too common to need any justification; nobody now thinks twice about accepting, for instance, the two progressions shown in Exx. 1 and 2



as the respective equivalents of those in Exx. 3 and 4; and most of Ravel's more daring harmonies are obtained in a precisely similar manner, except that he goes farther and alters the octave of the chord instead of its fifth, or even combines the chromatically altered fifth and octave with their unaltered selves in the same chords, indulging in such a lively sequence as the following (from "l'Heure Espagnole"):



It would be interesting to develop this point at greater length, and submit more examples for analysis, but the scope of this paper does not

permit the devotion of more space to this technical question. But the instance quoted will, it is hoped, give a clue to many readers who are puzzled at the apparent absence of all connection between modern harmony as it is actually written and the so-called harmony of the text-books; it will also explain why Ravel must be considered first and foremost as a traditionalist and not as a rebel. Hé is admittedly fond of the sharper discords, and much of his harmony seemed to his hearers both daring and wilful when it was first written ten or fifteen years ago. This phrase, for instance, from the third of the Mallarmé songs, looks at first sight like one of the arbitrary collocations of the Objective Tonal Researchers: —

Ex. 6.

The musical score for Ex. 6 consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line with the lyrics "sur - gi" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) marking and features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "de la croupe et du bond" and the piano accompaniment, which ends with the word "etc.".

but take it to pieces and you find it is a succession of quite ordinary chords of the ninth and thirteenth (to use the convenient labels), which have undergone the process of chromatic alteration previously described. This method is merely a development of one of the regular methods by which the *materia harmonica* has been constantly increased during the last three hundred years or so, and the particular discord

of the chromatic second so favoured by Ravel was a commonplace in the English music of the sixteenth century. Ravel is merely doing harmonically what Tallis and Whyte did contrapuntally; his justification is precisely and logically the same as that of Monteverde, who first* employed the dominant seventh as an independent chord.

Chords that are perfectly logical in themselves, however, may become a nuisance if they are not used with discretion; and it is impossible to deny that Ravel is often the slave rather than the master of his harmonic system. He drops into his own particular *clichés* as easily as Brahms into that of the flattened sixth or Delius into that of the sliding semitonic bass. The fundamental weakness of most modern French composers is that they try to make harmony do too much; they are obsessed by the word "*sonorité*," drugged by it into forgetfulness of the great truth that melody and rhythm are the vital and dynamic elements of music. This is not the observation of a prejudiced outsider; they were warned of it long ago by so good a Frenchman as M. Vincent d'Indy, a teacher from whom French music must show itself much more willing to learn than it has hitherto done if it is really to come into its own. To this weakness Ravel sometimes falls a victim. As a rule his melodic sense is clear and firm, though his imagination has no great strength of wing and can seldom compass more than a short flight. When it fails him, he falls back on harmony, and his style, always a little self-conscious, degenerates quickly into mere sophistication and mannerism, a veritable caricature of its real self. Ex. 7 is an extreme instance:

L'Heure Espagnole.

EX. 7. CONCEPTION.

Il reste, voilà bien ma chaise !

* Of course he was not the first, but he will serve as well as another to point the moral, so the old fable may pass here without contradiction.

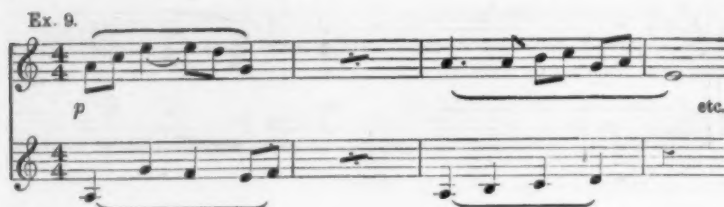
le jour de la se-maine où mon é-poux est loin etc.
etc.

This is most noticeable in his larger orchestral works—in the *Rhapsodie Espagnole*, for instance, and *Daphnis and Chloe*, where for the greater part of the time he tries to delude his hearers into accepting recondite harmonies and specious orchestration as a substitute for music. It is not by such works that he will live, and when we are tempted to judge him too harshly on their account, we may well turn to the smaller works and admire the innumerable felicities of style they contain—the opening of the Quartet, for instance, with that scale of tenths climbing up and up under the melody as if it would never stop; to the texture of the accompaniment that brings in the second subject, ethereal in its lightness, yet clear as daylight in its harmonic delineation (Ex. 8);

Ex. 8.
pp très expr.
pp
pp très expr.
pizz.
pp

to the duet between flute and horn at the opening of "Ma Mère l'Oye," and the significant intensity which the melody acquires when it re-

appears a few bars later in the simplest three-part harmony over a subdominant pedal (Exx. 9 and 10);

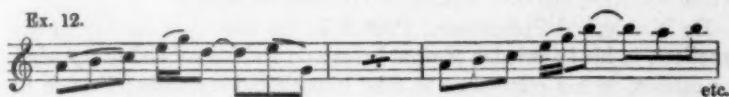


at the melancholy cadence of the "Forlane" in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*; at the tenderness of the fifth of the "Valse Nobles," at the whimsical gallantry of the sixth, at the dexterity of the epilogue which rounds off this the most intimate and self-revealing work of all that he has hitherto written. Exotics if you like, but delicate and fragrant exotics that appeal to us more, in certain moods, than the simpler and more enduring beauties of the hedgerow.

It is in the matter of structure rather than of harmony, however, that Ravel's technique derives so unmistakably from the past. Throughout his career he has shown a fondness for the smaller dance forms associated with the suite, such as the Pavan and the Minuet, whilst one of his most recent works, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, is a series of pieces grouped frankly in the manner of the suite, though not quite on the lines of Couperin. It is no mere whim that turns his fancy to this antique pattern. Much that we find in Ravel has to be explained as a reaction against his immediate predecessors. He has no use for the heavy romanticism of the nineteenth century, with its turgid rhetoric and portentous emotions; he turns in horror from its mythological morasses and seeks refuge in the trim parterres of the eighteenth century, where he can find light and air, good breeding and good

manners, a tradition of reticence and good taste to check the outburst of sentimental egoism. The period is limited in outlook, no doubt; it is not an age of great endeavour or lofty aspiration, but at any rate it is free from pretensions and sham heroics. For such virtues Ravel has an instinctive sympathy, and he has found that much of his thought pours easily and naturally into the eighteenth century mould. He is undeterred by its formalism; quite rightly, for his own genius is of the type that expresses itself more readily within the limits of a certain formal restraint. When he has ideas that call for development he turns as naturally to Haydn and Mozart; the early string quartet and the comparatively recent pianoforte trio are both cast in perfectly orthodox four-movement form, with expositions, workings-out, recapitulations in the tonic, and so on, all complete.

His method of development is quite his own, and quite appropriate to the matter in hand. One might say, perhaps, that it is tactical rather than strategic; there is no Napoleonic marshalling of force after force till the whole array is set, no gradual unfolding of a single dominant idea working its way irrevocably towards fulfilment. Ravel's development is more a comedy of manners, a succession of delightful surprises and unexpected situations, an entertainment devised rather to interest the spectator than to purge him by pity or terror or Rabelaisian merriment. This is, perhaps, more true of the quartet than of the trio, for the latter is larger in scope than most of his other works, and deals (in two of its movements at any rate) with more serious issues. He sets himself a peculiarly difficult problem in the first movement, which is based mainly on the following rhythmic idea: (Ex. 11):



Here the metre is too sharply defined to allow of any of the eluded accents, telescoped measures, or similar devices which enable a composer to avoid squareness and monotony, and to achieve suppleness and continuity of rhythm. No compromise is possible and Ravel

attempts none; time after time the theme appears, insistently and aggressively the same, not only in its accentual succession ($\frac{3}{8} \frac{2}{8} \frac{3}{8}$) but in all its agogic details. In the second subject (Ex. 12) the details are altered, but the metrical succession ($\frac{3}{8} \frac{2}{8} \frac{3}{8}$) remains the same, disguised only by an occasional overlap, thus :



Such a metre is hardly suitable for an extended movement of this type; as an introduction, it might serve very well, but not for the whole movement. The listener is too conscious of each metrical division as it comes; the rhythm lacks freedom and continuity; it is like reading a poem where the end of every line coincides with a punctuation mark. The movement is a fine piece of music, nevertheless, for its themes are inherently noble, and it sweeps along a consistently high plane of thought. Indeed, the trio as a whole, despite the inferiority of the last movement, is the one work that makes one doubt whether Ravel has yet produced the best it is in him to produce, and whether he may not one day come out with a work that shall compel us to revise much of our previous judgment. Apart from the trio, one would have little hesitation, for in his other work, even at his happiest, his shortcomings are as clearly defined as his virtues—his harmonic sophistication, his rhythmical short-windedness, his trick of repeating a bar or two bars of melody *verbatim* instead of thinking in long phrases of which no part, it may be, bears any obvious relationship to any other part, and yet the whole somehow achieves coherence and organic unity.

He is a typical Frenchman; French in the cool clear quality of his intellect, in his knowledge of what he can do and his refusal to try what he cannot, in his reluctance to take himself too seriously; French in his technical virtuosity and his love of delicate effects; French even in his formality and his reverence (if one may predicate reverence of so impish a creature) for the traditions of the past. Yet, though himself so French, he is a dangerous influence for any young French composer. He is too freakish and individual to be a *maître d'école*, and the disciple who yields to the spell will do no more than reproduce the mannerisms

of his master. He is of those whom we value less for the importance of what they have to say than for the manner in which they say it. Such men cannot be called great poets, but they are poets to whom we turn again and again when we want something to read, yet are disinclined to thread the mazes of an argument or watch a passion torn ferociously to tatters. They are content to give us a quip, or a conceit, an exquisite cadence, it may be, or a happily turned phrase, and if we are wise we ask no more. Of this brotherhood is Ravel, and when you and he are in the right humour for one another, you shall scarcely find a more delightful companion.

R. O. MORRIS.

AN OLD MASTER

Il n'y a rien qui soit si nécessaire aux hommes que la danse. . . Tous les malheurs des hommes, tous les revers funestes dont les histoires sont remplies, les bévues des politiques, les manquements des grands capitaines, tout cela n'est venu que faute de savoir danser.

THERE may perhaps be some people who are hardly prepared to accept this as a universal truth. They may even go so far as to think that the artist who says this cannot be a real character at all, but is a creation of Molière's own. As to the truth of the sentiment, I do not feel myself in a position to judge, though from what I have observed, I should be inclined to say that many worse reasons have been given before now as excuse for *les bévues des politiques*; but as to the reality of the personage, I can only say that it has been my privilege to learn from one who was the very re-incarnation of M. Jourdain's famous teacher. Centuries and environment had altered him, it is true, but in his sense of the seriousness and the necessity of his vocation, he was essentially the same man. The old master was Molière's *maître à danser* seen through the medium of a cathedral city. The wig has changed to sparse iron grey locks, the brave satin coat and ruffles, the knee breeches, the silk stockings, are replaced by a suit of clerical black broadcloth, white shirt front, black tie. The buckled shoes have become cloth boots, close fitting, elastic sided, with shining leather tips.

Molière's *maître à danser* was a good fellow and a true artist. His vocation was all in all to him, but he took it gaily. He might be a genial *abbé* of the dancing cult; the old master was its archdeacon. I do not suppose it ever crossed his mind that dancing was an amusement, nor, for that matter, an education for the human frame generally. His motto was: "Look after the feet, and the rest may take care of itself." His interest began and ended in the exact pointing of the toe, the exact angle of the foot—in the first, second, or third position. The old master was very tall, rather spare, slightly stooping; he had a most reverend appearance, an impassive countenance; I never remember seeing him smile. He spoke only of his art, and of his bees; for he kept bees in the small garden, at the back of his austere little old brick house. He taught dancing steps as works of art in themselves, not as means to an end; and I do not think we often had an idea that

the elaborately described and dissected movements we slowly learnt had any connection with each other or with any dance as a whole.

In learning a step, we were first shown it by the old master, the cloth boots describing it to us, on the red-patterned drugget, with a mathematical precision. About an hour would then be spent in acquiring perhaps one-half of it, the exact position of each part of the foot during each part of the step being mapped out by the stars on the drugget. Then the moment arrived for doing it "with the music." The old master raised his little fiddle to his chin and played a little pizzicato tune, dancing himself the while with fitting gravity. The chaos always resulting from first attempts with the tune he took patiently—with a kind of bitter resignation. He would sometimes ejaculate, if one pupil crossed to the wrong side or another forgot to turn out both feet equally, "Now she's off!" or, "There's a pretty toe!" But, as a rule, he only implied that he thought something was very wrong; though "least said soonest mended," and the only thing to be done was to begin all over again, and practise each minute detail without loss of time. I do not know where he got his little tunes, or whether he invented them as he went along; I never heard any others like them, and they all had the same staid and practical quality. He had a violin bow, but that was chiefly employed in pointing out the exact spot on the carpet where the toe and the heel should be at a given time; I do not think he often used it for playing the violin. He was always entirely engrossed with his lesson and expected us to be the same; but we were a small class of stupid, well-behaved children, without the least taste or aptitude for the dance, as it was then presented to us.

The class was held at his own house in the parlour carpeted with its red and grey drugget, and the rest of the furniture pushed out of the way, the only other object I remember being a cluster of ivory white skeleton leaves under a glass shade on a small round table. Besides these private lessons and public classes—the weekly services of his serious cult—the old master officiated at the festivals, in the shape of annual balls held at the time of the autumn Assizes. There he might be seen as master of the ceremonies, in his black broadcloth and his cloth boots and his large white gloves, greeting each arrival with a bow and, when the dancing began, standing at the top of the room with his feet elaborately turned out, in the first position, and lending his countenance to the proceedings. He taught everybody. All the company were past pupils, or parents of present ones. Everybody knew him, he was as much a part of the festivities as the room itself.

The balls were his well-earned "benefit." I do not know how he endured the sight of ballroom dancing, even though his was the day of

quadrilles and slow valseing and the Lancers sedately performed. If he could have seen the developments in dancing to-day—the enthusiasms for the Russian ballet, the activities of the Folk Dance Society—what would have happened to him? His dearest convictions would have been assailed, and to see his own pupils recognising such false shrines would have taken away his belief in human nature. The pagan origin of the folk-dances he would have accepted without question, for he would have been in the position of a true believer confronted with idolatry.

His successors who train the present generation in the cathedral city teach, according to advertisement—

Grace Culture, Rhythmic, Mime, and Ballet Dancing, Side and Centre Practice, Steps of Elevation, Enchantments, Skipping a speciality;

but there will never be a teacher of them all, who will be so wrapped up in his work, as the old master,—dancing master to all the children in the county—with his cloth boots, and his red-patterned drugget, and his little fiddle under his chin.

PRISCILLA WYATT-EDGEELL.

Messrs. W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., Cambridge, have in the press a volume entitled *The Lover's Tasks and Five Other Plays*, by Lady Frances Darwin, with an introduction by Mr. Cecil Sharp. These plays are all concerned with the life of country people, and they are in some slight degree based on the folk songs of England. They are not written in dialect, but show an understanding of the thoughts and speech of country people. They have already been acted by village players of many counties.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Arthur Coleridge, Reminiscences. Edited by J. A. Fuller Maitland. Constable.

This is a book for Devonians, lawyers and musicians, and for all who like to read of a kindly, lovable man. It is full of good stories, and would have been still fuller but for a regrettable accident to a manuscript. As delightful as any of them are the arch turns given to the sentences in the diaries—the country vicar who "mapped out (the course taken by Jonah during his temporary imprisonment) with wild infelicity"—the incident "which Lord Tennyson thought had better have been suppressed"—the description of Dr. S. S. Wesley as a man "much given to paradox and a general mover of amendments to any form of expressed opinion."

The musical recollections occupy a full quarter of the book. They reassure us that what we have been told of Jenny Lind and Lablache is no more than the truth. They re-enforce traits of character one suspected in Julius Benedict and S. S. Wesley. They show us thinking musicians gradually putting Schumann by the side of Mendelssohn, the excitement of introducing Bach to an English audience, the doubt about Handel, the fears for Spohr and the wane of Mendelssohn. It is all particularly refreshing because it is written quite without vanity or exaggeration, and it comes from one who was a great part of all he saw and heard, and no departmental musician.

The editing of the book is excellent; one has not noticed a needless repetition or a comma too many.

Second Pianoforte Sonata, "Concord, Mass., 1840-1860." By Charles E. Ives.

Essays before a Sonata. By the same. The Knickerbocker Press, New York.

"These prefatory essays were written by the composer for those who can't stand his music—and the music for those who can't stand his essays; to those who can't stand either, the whole is respectfully dedicated." These words, with which Mr. Ives introduces himself to his public, show that he possesses a sense of humour: of which there might perhaps otherwise have been some doubt. The essays (120 pp.) and the sonata (63 pp. of music with 8 pp. of letterpress repeated from the essays) form a whole which is "an attempt to present one person's impression of the spirit of transcendentalism that is associated in the minds of many with Concord, Mass., of over a half-century ago": in both essays and sonata there are sections entitled "Emerson," "Hawthorne," "The Alcotts," and "Thoreau," and the essays have also a Prologue and an Epilogue. The somewhat flamboyant culture of the essays is at times distinctly shaky, and Mr. Ives' literary style is not only transcendental but also breathlessly Massachusettsian: but his general drift can be made out fairly well, and some of the few pages that are in any way concerned with music have good sense under their

verbiage. The sonata, however, is the thing, and a very unusual thing it is.

A reviewer of modernist piano music has necessarily hardened himself to a great deal and is not easily taken aback: but "Concord, Mass." may be safely recommended as a tonic to anyone bored with the reactionary conservatism of European extremists. Mr. Ives has, indeed, some patents that are perhaps entirely his own—such as the simultaneous pounding of the piano by both clenched fists (an interesting effect best practised on someone else's instrument)—or the employment of "a strip of board 14½ ins. long and heavy enough to press the keys down without striking," twelve black or sixteen white keys according to circumstances, but apparently a magic board, as a book of the proper dimensions fails to produce the proper effects, no sufficient resonance having been previously set up in the lower octaves—or the bewildering notation in virtue of which Mr. Ives (like Humpty Dumpty in *Alice through the Looking-glass*) makes a semibreve or anything else mean just what he chooses it to mean, though what he actually does choose is often far from obvious. No doubt there must be misprints in this music that for pages and pages on end sounds pretty much the same with any other rhythms or clefs or accidentals: but it can hardly be nothing but misprints. And every now and then (the oases, if they can be so called, amount to about 2 per cent. of the whole) we come across passages of the plainest common chords that sound exactly like a beginner's first attempts at harmony exercises. Mr. Ives' style is sadly familiar here: so, indeed, in quite another way, is the style of the 98 per cent., at any rate in households where the baby or the cat has access to the piano.

The copy of the sonata sent for review is marked "Complimentary: copies are not sold." But if Mr. Ives declines to barter his transcendentalism for filthy lucre, he may perhaps be willing to give it away on application to him at Redding, Conn., U.S.A. It is well worth trying.
E. W.

Cock and Harlequin. By Jean Cocteau. Trans. by R. H. Myers. The Egoist, Ltd.

Harlequin appears on p. 33 in a monogram (by Picasso) of loops which are to symbolise the fatuous smile of those who strain their ears in order, after all, to hear nothing in the music of Eric Satie. The Cock (p. 17) rounds off some paragraphs on the theme of *Le coq de France c'est le coq de gloire*, while he looks defiance across the Rhine. Cock—short for Cocteau—is eternal youth making mock of sempiternal eld (Harlequin), and ejaculating quick wisdom by the way, e.g., "If it has to choose who is to be crucified, the crowd will always save Barabbas." Youth, incidentally, "accapbrates" some of the old catchwords. "The musician opens the cage-door to arithmetic" is Spinoza; (music-hall art) "stimulates in the same way as machinery, animals, natural scenery, or danger" is modernised Croce. "Even when you blame, only be concerned with what is first class" needs no particular *qui ante nos*; it is the property of the human race. These sentences only show that the best modern criticism has, like the best modern music, its roots in the past. There are plenty of things that have not been said before—"Music is not all the time a gondola, or a racehorse, or a tight rope. It is sometimes a chair as well"—and only a few that were not worth saying—"With us, a young musician finds . . . in

opposition a stimulant. In Germany he finds ears. The longer they are the more they listen."

Except for a phrase or two, where Mr. Myers seems momentarily to have forgotten his English, the book is well translated.

La Vie, l'Œuvre et la Mort d'Albéric Magnard. By Gaston Carraud.
Paris: Rouart-Lerolle.

This book, in scope and in treatment, is a perfect example of what a work should be, which is devoted to a composer upon whose music the last word has not been and cannot be said. Eulogistical, and yet full of sound criticism, it will inspire all readers with the wish to know Magnard's music.

Few readers will be able to compare the author's views of Magnard with their own, for few people are acquainted with Magnard's works. The composer, distrustful of publishers, elected to publish his music himself, and thereby forfeited most of his chances of promulgation.

His conception of his art was lofty, abstract, essentially austere. His ideal was "pure music," devoid of picturesque features, whose emotional purport remained closely tied to the working of the intellect. He was deeply concerned with form, and desirous of remaining true to the principles of classical architecture. He did not believe in "poetic freedom" for music, and disliked tone-poems and tone-pictures. Beethoven is the master to whom he always turned for guidance. His dramatic music owes much to Wagner. "But," Carraud writes, "he does not try to launch the drama, as Wagner did, into the torrent of the Beethovenian symphony. On the contrary, he wishes the symphony to guide and to maintain the drama according to an order, a logic, a rhythm which are properly symphony's own. Symphony and drama may come into close contact: they never merge into one another."

Magnard, born in 1865, was killed by the Germans in 1914, at the time when, after a long, anxious period of groping, he was beginning to feel sure of his methods and direction. His four symphonies and other orchestral works, his three lyric tragedies, his quintet, quartet, trio and sonatas mark various stages of an evolution interrupted just as the artist was reaching his goal. Therefore, when considering his works, we may feel that we have not the full key to it. The future will perhaps render clear what remains enigmatic in it, and reveal in the light of a precursor that composer whom at present many consider retrogressive, on account of his love for pure form and of the austerity of his idiom.

Events show how well justified that final hypothesis was: for of late, young French composers such as Darius Milhaud have begun to hail, precisely in Magnard, a precursor.

M.-D. C.

The Spirit of French Music. By Pierre Lasserre, translated by Denis Turner. Kegan Paul.

De Couperin à Debussy. By Jean Chantavoine. Paris: Alcan.

Mr. Pierre Lasserre is a critic whose knowledge, sound sense, and capacity for analysis or synthesis are vouched for by excellent books such as *Les Idées de Nietzsche sur la Musique*, and especially the *History of French Romanticism*. Therefore, I was surprised to find this volume of his rather disappointing—in respect, perhaps, not so

much of its contents as of the bearing of the contents on the title. The author, it is true, tells us that if he devotes four chapters out of six to Meyerbeer, to Italian composers, and to Wagner, it is because his aim is "to guide the public taste in a certain direction." So that it might be fairer, before criticising further, to await the second volume, which is to deal with Lulli, Monsigny, Boieldieu, Berlioz, and the modern French.

Mr. Lasserre's way, however, is very roundabout. One cannot help wondering whether he is not trying to do what Mr. Chantavoine, in his book bearing the unassuming title *De Couperin à Debussy*, has succeeded in doing most thoroughly: to define the "spirit" of French music, and illustrate the definition. He says, indeed, that "the French spirit, the French taste, can hardly be defined." Yet Mr. Chantavoine has disengaged an excellent definition: French music, he tells us, from the days of the Troubadours to the days of Debussy, remains dependent upon a number of intellectual considerations—a fact which accounts, among other things, for the comparative neglect of instrumental music in France. It is never free from the influence of words and thought, nor from that of the other arts; and it often borrows from other countries what it lacks: melody from Italy, rhetorics from Germany.

Mr. Chantavoine's book, with its excellent chapters on Rameau, Berlioz, Massenet, Chabrier and others, will therefore serve the purpose of the investigator into the spirit of French music better than M. Lasserre's. But M. Lasserre's brisk essays on the musicians, French or not French, whom he likes or dislikes, will be read with interest.

M.-D. C.

Histoire des Instruments de Musique. By René Brancour. Paris: Laurens.

M. René Brancour, the curator of the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire, has written what we understand is the first book offering an historical survey of all instruments used in the modern orchestra and their prototypes. He describes the evolution of forms and mechanism, adduces points referring to the use made of those instruments by the masters, and even a number of references to each instrument by poets and prose-writers.

It is a book for the general public rather than for the student. The information it contains is generally accurate, although one is surprised to read that the baritone oboe sounds a fifth lower than the English horn. But, even should there be other slips of that kind, the book as a whole will prove instructive to those for whom it is intended.

M.-D. C.

Musical Presentation of Motion Pictures. By G. W. Beynon. G. Schirmer, New York.

The "movies" are a serious thing and clearly, from this book, take themselves seriously. Primarily, they desire to exist through a fierce competition, and even to have butter on their bread; but secondarily, and "back of" that, they aspire to become a "force to be reckoned with" and to "make the songs of the people," and all that; or, in Mr. Beynon's own words, "the future holds a promise, stupendous in its magnitude, that picture music will rank favourably with grand opera and symphony." That they will oust opera, that is, that they will

deplete operatic audiences, is only too likely, because of its cost and because of the declension of the art of singing all over the world. But that they should oust symphony (taking that word as a synonym for absolute music) could be prophesied only by one who had no idea why music exists or, indeed, had never experienced the satisfaction that art alone gives.

All this is at present a long way off. But the American picture show—and one of the first magnitude is to be seen with the naked eye in every town-section—has already a full-sized orchestra or £5,000 worth of organ; and the proprietors foresee the day when a first-class composer will write a properly "doped" (cued) work to run concurrently with the whole film. That, if and when it comes to pass, will be genuine music, and welcome as such. But the makeshift which is here advocated, pending that millennium, is not so welcome. There is nothing educative or even intellectually tolerable in using musical works for all the purposes for which they were not written. To use Verdi's *Otello*—the "Credo," presumably—to depict horror of whatever kind—and the film usually contains a good many kinds—does not quite sound like playing the game. Rachmaninov's "Prelude" portrays, we are told, distress, and the employment of that we are better able to bear, as it has already gone the way of the "Lost Chord" and the "Intermezzo"; but it is instructive to learn that it portrays distress chiefly because "we know the dominant emotion which impelled its creation." In that case music "means" not itself but its title—the principle on which Beethoven's Fifth Symphony was used to point an incident in the *Boatswain's Mate*. We are warned, it is true, against selecting by title, but practically the selection comes back mainly to that criterion, and the *tempo*. But *tempo* is the obedient servant of the conductor; the "effective" use of an Adagio—that of the 4th symphony, let us say—is "gradually to accelerate the *tempo* as the cue for change appears."

The book is probably useful for those for whom it was written; it is certainly amusing for all others.

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